PALÆMON'S

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REVIEWED AND EXAMINE

WHEREIN

Several gross and dangerous Errors, advanced by the Author of the Letters on Theron and Aspasso, are detected and refuted;

AND

The Protestant Doctrine concerning the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace, Conviction of Sin, Regeneration, Faith, Justification, Inherent Grace, &c. vindicated from the Cavils and Exceptions of that Author, and there to be entirely conformable to the Apostolic Doctrine concerning the several Points afore-mentioned.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By DAVID WILSON.

Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the faints, Jude, ver. 3.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE

Theren and Aspasso, published a few years ago, I soon perceived such a spirit breathing through the whole of that performance, as would make one suspect, that the author thereof had something else in view than to defend the pure doctrines of the gospel, which he would have us believe is the

chief scope of his book.

This Gentleman pretends that he has discovered in the Dialogues wrote by the late excellent Mr. Hervey, and in some celebrated treatises and sermons therein recommended, several dangerous errors, and gross corruptions of the Christian doctrine; and insinuates, that the native tendency of these writings is to sully the honour, and obscure the glory of divine grace manifested in the atomement; to gratify human pride, and cherish that enmity that is in the heart of every man by nature against the true doctrine of the grace of God; and thus to insnare, seduce, and destroy the souls of men for ever. Could

he have made this appear, the Public, no doubt, would have been greatly indebted to him for his labour; as it must highly concern every one to know the truth in its purity and simplicity, and as stript of all those false colourings and disguises which men of corrupt minds are apt to put upon it; and thus be undeceived with regard to matters of

the last importance.

Could he prove what he has confidently afferted concerning some eminent ministers of the gospel; that the leading scope of their writings and fermons was to prompt and encourage men to work out and eftablish a righteousness of their own, in order to acceptance with God, and to gain their applause by artfully accommodating all the doctrines of the gospel to their religious pride; that, instead of preaching Christ Jefus the Lord, and proclaiming the glad tidings of falvation through a crucified Redeemer, it was their chief aim to fet forth their own importance; and that they were even fo arrogant as to usurp the character and work of Christ, in order the more effectually to gain the efteem, and procure the miration of their hearers; I confess, I fee what apology could be made for them; must acknowledge, that they deserve the of characters, as having been unabtedly the worst of men.

But an intelligent and unprejudiced reader, who peruses this author's book with the smallest degree of attention, will find that, through the whole, he rather supposes these things to be true, than proves, or even, by any fair method of reasoning, attempts to prove that they are so. He is indeed very liberal in his invectives against these worthy men, whose praise is in the churches; and with an air of felf-fufficiency, and a degree of confidence rarely to be met with, brands them with the opprobrious names of enemies to the ancient apostolic gospel, Pharifees, self-feeking men, Scribes and disputers of this world, double dealers with God and man, &c. He puts what conftructions he pleases upon their words and expressions, and ordinarily wrests them to a meaning which they never intended, yea, which is directly opposite to their declared principles, and the whole scope and tendency of their doctrine; and then declaims with great warmth, and sometimes at great length, against those errors and false opinions which he would make the reader believe are the native confequences of what they taught. By fuch deceitful artifices as these he may impose upon the weak and unwary, but the attentive and judicious will easily perceive the fraud, ab his difingenuity, and treat his impertin

and triffing cavils with that contempt which they deferve.

It is, not easy to conceive what could prompt this author to wound the reputation, and lead the memory of men now in their graves, and who have hitherto been justly accounted eminent for piety, gifts, usefulness, and zeal in maintaining, inculcating and promoting the pure truths of the gospel, with fuch a number of heavy accusations, and strange aspersions; unless we may suppofe, that he and his friends finding, that their books and fermons had been amply recommended by Mr. Hervey, took the alarm, fearing that the judgment of fuch an ingenious and polite writer, one so much applauded and admired by perfons of different denominations, might have weight with the Public, and occasion a more general propagation of those doctrines, which seemed to bear no favourable aspect toward the particular tenets and opinions in religion, by which they have thought proper to diftinguish themselves from all other professors of Christianity. The stady is house had

There was indeed some ground to suspect, that thus they might suffer considerably in their character, and find it more difficult to their character, and find it more difficult to their admittance to their favourite notions in this kingdom, where either an avowed contempt, or ignorance and a supine neglect of

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the true doctrines of the gospel almost univerfally prevailed, till of late God was pleased to raise up, and singularly qualify some few to appear in the defence of the same, and at-

tempt their revival.

The laudable endeavours of fuch, with the fuccess that has attended them, must no doubt have given great fatisfaction to all fincere lovers of truth, and struck them with agreeable furprise: but it appears, that any thing of this kind has had a very different effect upon the author of the letters, and his brethren; that it has only provoked their emulation, flimulated their envy, and pushed them on to make a vigorous opposition to those falutary doctrines that have, of late, been warmly espoused, judiciously explained, and zealoufly vindicated by some writers of known and diffinguished abilities; particularly, by the ingenious author of the Dialogues between Theron and Afpafio. They feem to be afraid of nothing more, than that the valuable and important truths taught, and inculcated in some practical treatises recommended by that excellent writer, should meet with a more favourable reception among people of different denominations than hitherto they have obtained, especially among men of falhion and influence.

But, were those Gentlemen as humble and felf-denied as they pretend to be, one should think the dread of fuch an event would have given them no disturbance. As they have been taught to think that every thing, and confequently every doctrine, every fystem, that is highly effeemed among men, not of their communion, is an abomination in the fight of God; it might have been supposed, that any farther or more general propagation of those writings, upon which they have thought fit to pour so much contempt, that might be procured by the means aforefaid, would have been rather matter of rejoicing to them, than a provocation of anger and incentive to emulation; as furnishing them with an additional argument to prove the fallity thereof, and their contrariety to the ancient gospel; the true knowledge and belief of which, according to them, must still be confined within the narrow limits of their little independent societies. But it is ealy to find, upon occasion, that these men are not fuch proficients in felf-denial, nor fo much mortified to the efteem and applause, even, of those whom they are pleased to rank with the world, as they would make us believe they are.

A convincing proof of this we have in the very style and spirit of the letter writer, who, it is evident, has been at no small coins to qualify himself for appearing in the character of an author, so as to make some figure

figure in the polite world, and recommend himself to men of taste and fashion. And it appears, that his endeavours this way have not been altogether unsuccessful; for his talents as a writer are far from being contemptible, though, for his own sake, we could have wished he had improved them in another manner and to a better purpose, than he has done in his letters on Theren

and Aspasio.

This Gentleman affects to be accounted a steady friend to the ancient gospel, and a zealous contender for apostolic and primitive Christianity; but, from his manner of writing, one would rather be apt to take him for an infidel in disguise, and suspect that he has acted in concert with some determined enemies of the gospel; or, at least, that by endeavouring to throw an odium on all ferious religion and practical godliness, he intended to infinuate himself into the good graces of those Gentlemen whose religion chiefly confifts in ridiculing and reviling every thing that ordinarily goes by that name. One thing appears evident, that he is no ftranger to the writings of some modern unbelievers, nor of a temper very different from theirs; for in managing his plea against the doctrines of Christianity, as explained and improved by those whom he is pleased to call the popular preachers, he has exactly followed

their example. And, indeed, he is fuch a proficient in their way of writing, as is rarely to be met with among any who shew the least veneration for the Christian religion.

It is well known that those Gentlemen who affect the name of deifts and free-thinks ers, though very sparing of their arguments, have usually such a copious fund of self-sufficiency as abundantly furnishes them with weapons of another kind, namely, confident affertions, raillery, ridicule, and the like; which, however unfit to do execution upon their more intelligent adversaries, not only ferve to keep them fome way in countenance, when stript of any other armour, but also enable them to make a tolerably good figure in the eyes of unconcerned and indifferent spectators, or men who never put themfelves to the trouble of inquiring, whether the Christian religion is true or false; and even render them formidable to the weak and timorous, however well-disposed otherwife. And it must be owned, that the use of this kind of weapons, in controversies about religion, has its own advantages, which our author feems not to have been infible of: for, though banter and ridiwith firong and confident affertions, requently repeated, can never convince an dverfary, and are never intended to do fo; yet they thay confound, embarrais and intimidate

timidate him in his reasoning, and thus cause him to make but an indifferent if not forry figure before a haughty, supercilious antagonist. Besides, what operates upon the passions has ordinarily a more speedy and sensible effect upon the far greater part of mankind, than that which is chiefly calculated to influence and regulate the judgment.

The author of the letters would make his readers believe, that the leading scope of his performance is to shew, that the gospel, when rightly understood, cuts off all occafion for boalting and glorying in the creature, and leaves no room for any fuch felfpleasing imagination in the minds of any of the human race; as that, on account of their own good qualifications, experiences, or any pious endeavours they may be supposed to be conscious of, call them works of the law, acts of faith, or whatever else you please, they have a better claim to the favour of God, or are more worthy of his mercy than others, even the most guilty, and the vilest of mankind. And there is ground to think, that some through weakness, or a strange kind of inadvertency, apprehending that fome fuch thing as this was whathe really had in view, have been disposed to entertain a more favourable opinion of him and his scheme, than otherwise they would have had. But. But, had this Gentleman honeftly intended to vindicate the doctrine of justification, through the imputed righteoufness, and to detect and rectify mistakes, which either divines in preaching and writing, or Christians in their exercise, might be apt to fall into, concerning the matter of acceptance with God, he would never have discovered fuch a warm opposition to those eminent preachers of the gospel, who made it their bufiness, and whose leading aim it was, in all their discourses and writings, to teach, prove, illustrate, inculcate, and vindicate the fame doctrine; and to shew the folly and danger of the like mistakes, and warn their hearers of the evil and fatal tendency of them; who, when addressing themselves to the consciences of the guilty, did not fail to thew them the extreme hazard of feeking rightenuinels and life by, or, as it were, by the works of the law; of doing or attempting to do any thing, with a view to recommend themselves to the favour of God, or lav a foundation for any peculiar claim to his mercy, or the benefit of the divine rightcournels; constantly affirming, that no good qualificans -a finner may imagine he is possessed no good done by him, or even wrought in by the divine Spirit; is ever to be conered relied upon, or confided in, as any God God; or as furnishing him with any better claim to the divine mercy and falvation, than the greatest and most guilty sinners upon earth are supposed to have, in confequence of the indefinite call, free promife and offer of the gospel directed to sinners of mankind as fuch; that the falvation of every believer from first to last is wholly of grace; and that, not any duties or endeavours of his own; no inward motion, feeling, impression, or experience of any kind; nothing on account of which he can be supposed to excel the rest of mankind, even the most wretched and unworthy; but the Lord Jesus Christ, as exhibited in the word and promifes of the gospel, is his righteousness, his life, his hope, and the all of his falvation.

This is the doctrine; these are the sentiments of those worthy men whom the letter-writer, with a degree of assurance that can hardly be paralleled, reproaches as corrupters and perverters of the ancient gospel, deceitful workers, modern Pharisees, sworn enemies to the belief of the truth as the

fole ground of hope, &c.

He endravours to throw an odium upon their characters and doctrine by a method truly extraordinary; not by thewing that their fentiments, or any principles that they held, are contrary to the Scriptures; for he himself acknowledges, "that, having large-

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" ly infifted on the corruption of human " nature, concluded the whole world guilty " before God, and eloquently fet forth the necessity of an atonement, they zealouf-" ly maintained the scriptural doctrine concerning the person and work of Christ *," which, even according to his own view of the matter, must include the whole apostolic gofpel; but by infinuating, that all the improvement they made of that doctrine was intended to gratify the pride of their hearers, and put them upon doing fomething for their own justification, or in order to acceptance with God, and " that they might be in a condition to advance fome claim up-" on the Deity, and treat with him on fome " rule of equity; or fo as they might " find fome reason why he should regard them more than others, and accordingly " grant the favours they defire of him +."

What has he to support this charge against the eminent preachers above-mentioned? After all his cavilling and sophistical reasonings, it, indeed, amounts to no more than this, that they not only taught and explained the pure truths of the gospel, but endeavoured to inculcate and urge them upon the consciences of their hearers, and directed them to make a suitable improvement of

Pag. 8. of his Letters on Theron, &c. 1st edit: † P. 345, 346.

the same; accommodating them, in the mean time, to their various conditions and circumstances; that, not content with declaring that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, bath fulfilled all righteousness, died and rose again; they exhorted their hearers to believe on bis. name, using such motives and arguments, for enforcing the exhortation, as the Inspired Writings plentifully furnished them with, and directed them to use; or in other words, that, not accounting it fufficient, merely to fet the food or bread of life before needy starving sinners in a doctrinal way, they exhorted and intreated them, with much fervency and earnestness, to take and eat, or apply it to their own use; that they not only declared, agreeably to the Scriptures, that Jefus Christ is the gift of God to perishing finners of mankind; but called and beseeched them, every one of them in particular, to accept of the gift, and not despife or neglect, but take the benefit of the proclamation and promifes of grace made to them in the everlafting gospel; at the same time warning them of their danger, if they should, by observing lying vanities, neglett their own mercy, and thus, with the unbelieving Jews of old, judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. In short, what he feems to quarrel with them chiefly for, is, that following the example of the bleffed apostle, according to the measure of grace

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given them, they travelled in birth, till Christ

should be formed in fouls.

It is true they taught, that, though the gift of righteousness is brought near to all finners belonging to the human race, without exception, in the promifes and dispensation of the gospel; yet none but those who are thoroughly convinced of their fin, guilt and mifery, will ever accept of it, or believe on the name of Christ; that men must know they are fick before they will apply to the physician for healing; that they must feel their spiritual fores and maladies before they can be truly concerned to obtain a cure; in a word, that they must know they are guilty before God, have nothing, and can do nothing, that can be in the least available for appealing divine wrath, justly incenfed against them for their transgressions; or which can be pleaded with fafety in answer to the just accusations of their own consciences, or the high demands of the divine law and justice, before they will accept of the gift of righteousness, and rely wholly upon the divine mercy, and merits of the bleffed Redeemer, for pardon and acceptance with God.

But did they ever affirm, that convictions, sense of guilt, or any qualifications of cindare necessary pre requisites to juscation; fo as any way to belong to the rounds of it, or make any part of the lin-TOTTO

or, so as, more or less, to intitle him to the benefit of the divine righteousness, as the letter writer would make us believe they did? No; they only taught, that the convictions afore mentioned are, in the very nature of the thing, necessary in order to a sinner's accepting of the benefit of that righteousness which delivereth from death; that one must know he is guilty, before he will either ask or accept of a pardon; and know that he is poor, and really in want, before he will humble himself to receive supply, or an alms of charity, at least from one he is very unwilling to be beholden to.

What harm could there be in all this? Do not the prophets in the Old Testament, and our Lord and his apostles in the New, frequently teach and inculcate the very same things? Does not every call and exhortation given to sinners, in the word of God, suppose them to be true? Yea, are they not necessarily implied in every description or account of saving faith; in every metaphor by which it is expressed, and in every similitude by which the nature and actings of it are illustrated, from one end of the

Bible to the other?

In fine, does not the very formal notion of justifying faith, whereby it is distinguished from that general cold affent to the truth in which those rational and philosophical Christians

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Christians for whom our author-professes to have fuch a hearty contempt, would have the effence of it to confift, necessarily suppose or imply the things afore mentioned? And, which is very furprifing, our author's own scheme of principles, if at all intelligible, is built upon a supposition of the truth of these very things, for afferting and inculcating which he inveighs fo warmly against those whom in derision he calls the popular

preachers.

For proof of this we need only refer to the words which he puts into the mouth of his converts who are supposed to stand fairest for enjoying the benefit of the atonement, and the only persons who are like to make Christ's bare work finished upon the cross, as he calls it, the fole foundation of their hope, and so obtain falvation through him. He makes them to profess strong convictions, and a deep fense of guilt and wretchedness; a sense not only of their distressed and de. plorable condition, but also of their utter inability to help themselves, to do any thing more or less for their own relief and salvation; wea, he supposes them to have attained to fuch a degree of contrition and humility, as can never be found with the votaries of the popular doctrine . Here then we have

Letters, &c. pages 47, 48, 85.

the very substance of those pre-requisites, namely, conviction of fin and misery, and of the vanity of all other ways of relief and falvation befides faith in Christ, and the atonement he has made, &c. which, without any reason, he affirms that the popular preachers hold to be necessary in order to put men in a condition to advance fome claim upon the Deity, fo as to treat with him on some rule of equity; though all that they affert concerning them is, that, though neither these nor any other personal qualifications are at all requifite in order to acceptance with God, as being in any respect, more or less, the ground of that acceptance; yet, in the very nature of the thing, and in the manner formerly hinted, they are necessary in order to our enjoying the benefit and comfort of the divine righteousness: and he himself evidently supposes the same thing, when he speaks with any sobriety, or so as any body can understand him. 103 possingtoo of 108 53

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What a difingenuous part then does this author act, in making that very thing the ground of those grievous accusations, and bold calumnies, whereby he endeavours to defame the character and asperse the memory of those excellent men, which is no less imputable to himself than to them; and which every one must be equally chargeable with who knows what he fays, when he

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talks of faith and justification through the imputed righteousness, or of the report of the gospel concerning that righteousness as the fole reason of hope? But the many palpuble inconfiftencies to be met with in our author's performance may come to be confidered more particularly afterwards. I shall only here observe, that were the letters on Theren and Afpafio purged of all the glaring contradictions, impertinent and trifling cavils to be found in them, and of all those ambiguous phrases and deceitful circumlocutions by which he endeavours to throw a milt before the eyes, or confound the minds of his readers, and make them admit notorious faishoods, and the most palpable absurdiperformance might be contained within the narrow compass of a very few pages.

Were we to judge of the author's scheme by the considence of his affertions, we should be apt to conclude, that it must certainly be just and very well supported; but the apostle exhorts us to try the spirits whether they are of God. This is an exhortation necessary to be put in practice by all who peruse the letters on Theron, &c. And if we may be allowed to try the doctrine taught, by the spirit-that breathes therein, we stall easily

perceive, that it is not a doctrine according to godliness, which the true apostolic gospel certainly is, but a doctrine which has a native tendency to introduce and encourage licentiousness, all manner of impiety and wickedness, and to expose religion and all serious godliness, with the professors thereof, to ridicule and contempt. And indeed from the author's manner of writing one would think, that his design must have been rather to prove, that there is no such thing as any true faith or godliness in the world, than to show what they really are.

This author begins his letters with fome fine compliments, which it feems he thought he to pay to the celebrated author of the Dialogues between Theren and Aspasio. And here, it must be acknowleded, he acquire himself very handsomely; with the language, air and address of a polite Gentleman; the honour of all which we are willing to allow him. Nor have I any quarrel with him for the encomiums he bestows on some valuable writings published by the ingenious Mr. Hervey, before he wrote his Theron and Aspasio. But had he been as zealous for the peculiar doctrines of Christianity as he pretends to be, I cannot help thinking, that fome things advanced in the two volumes of Meditations writ by that author would have is readily alarmed him, as those passages in

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the Dialogues, which he fignifies he was fo much shocked at, as to be laid under the difagreeable necessity of concluding, that he author had so far loft fight of the impued righteoulness as to substitute in its place preliminary human one. It is the opinion of fome, no less friends to the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and other truths of the gospel necessarily connected with it, than the letter-writer, that there are some things dropt occasionally in the Meditations much more exceptionable, than anything advanced in the Dialogues. I do not intend, by this observation, to cast any reflection upon the memory of the worthy author of the Meditations, whose very fingular modesty and humility made him fometimes extend his charity farther than either the honour or interest of truth will allow; but mention it only as an evidence of the partiality of the letter writer and his brethren, who have thought fit to thew a much warmer opposition to the doctrines contained in the Dialogues, as explained and improved by the au thor, than ever they did to the fame doctrines taught in the Meditations; though in the opinion of fome, who may be allowed to be as good judges as the author of the letters and his brethren, lefs clearly and unexceptionably in the latter than in the former.

Had the author of the Dialogues only been fo cautious as to have concealed his acquaintance with his new friends in Scotland, there is ground to think he would have been treated more civilly by the letter-writer and his party; but the uncommon regard and effeem he has unwarily professed to have for them, and the warm recommendation he has given of their writings and fermons, appear to have provoked the refentment of those Gentlemen, and wrought up their zeal against him and his doctrine to such a degree of fervour, that, whatever good opinion they might formerly have had of him from his other writings, now they have fo little charity for him as to rank him with the perverters of the ancient gospel, and those popular preachers who have hit upon the art of making all the doctrines of Chrifwanity subservient to the gratification of human pride; and therefore in all the explications they give, and all the improvement they make of these doctrines, while pretending to speak in the name of their divine Mafter, deal doubly and deceitfully both with God and man.

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Strangers may be surprised to find the author of the letters discovering such a degree of resentment against some eminent ministers of the gospel in Scotland, lately deceased, whose character, so far as I know,

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was never before attacked by any but open enemies to truth and godliness, and whose valuable writings have recommended them to the efteem of many serious Christians who never had any perional acquaintance with them; but those who have any particular knowledge of the history of the noted author of that fect in Scotland, whose particular tenets and opinions the letany particular acquaintance with the fpirit and temper of that Gentleman and his followers, will be at no loss to account for it. These are men by themselves; the only church of Christ that has been in the world for many ages, the only believers and lovers of the apostolic gospel, if we may take their own word for it; and all the doctrines and principles that do not tally, with their notions of the kingdom of heaven, and that extraordinary opinion they have conceived of them felves as the only apostolic Christians and genuine believers, this day, in the morid, must be rejected as false, spurgers, and Administration. ritian. But it would argue too s

Mr. Joba Glafe, a noted leparatift in Scotland, to peculiar turn of mind, joined with an uncompton me of opin innertweets, has given birth to mot of whitefaul concells and oddities by which he middle enter have thought fit to diffinguish themselves a every other denomination of Christians.

credulity, without any farther trial to believe their testimony concerning themselves.
It is but reasonable that their pretensions to
that extraordinary character which they assome to themselves be examined, before we
give implicit saith to their dictates and opimions; and if those shall be found well supported, this is what we cannot well refuse to
do; for indeed their pretensions are so high,
and the considence with which they deliver
their opinions so great, that we do not see
how any thing short of infallibility can wartant either.

Thefe Gentlemen often inveigh with great warmth against Antichristianism, and affect to thew an uncommon zeal against every. thing that feems to discover the least affinity to it; but fuch as are ever fo little acquaint ed with their writings may eafily fee, that though they want the power, they have the spirit of Antichrist. As they arrogate to themselves the only true church of Christ upon earth, they are bold to denounce their and bemas against all who presume to denvi or impugn their favourite notions; branding the very best and most eminent among them as seducers, Pharisees, hypocrites, inveterate enemies to the truth and gospel of Christ, &cc. for no other reason that I can see, but because they cannot adopt those extravagant notions, and whimfical concerts, which they VOL. I. would

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would obtrude upon the world under the name of the apostolic gospel. I am loth to affirm it, but it is too evident from the ftrain of their writings, and the temper of their minds, that, however much they may affect to declaim against the tyranny, pride and foirit of Antichrift, they are his genuine fons, as having not only imbibed his fpirit but adopted his fentiments with regard to ne most material articles of the Christian doctrine. And what they want of his worldly power and grandeur is too apparently made up by their pride, felf-confidence, and enmity against the pure truths and doctrines of the gospel; which while they pretend zealously to contend for, they do really attempt to determine and overthrow, fo as to deprive men of all the benefit and comfort of them.

The truth of this charge will clearly appear from the reflections made by the author of the letters on the scriptural and salutary doctrines taught and inculcated in that valuable work, intitled, Theron and Aspasso, or, A series of Dialogues and Letters upon the most important and interesting Subjects.

After paying his compliments to the author of the Dialogues, he observes some things very justly concerning the great importance of the article of justification thro

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the imputed righteoufness; and fignifies his approbation of a passage quoted from the famous Withus, thewing the strong influence which the doctrine of justification, according as it is well or ill flated, has upon the whole structure of the Christian religion. In this we readily agree with him, and do allow, that the remark is extremely just and pertinent; but while he professes an uncommon zeal for the purity and simplicity of that doctrine, and against all the various ways wherein it has been artfully corrupted, and accommodated to the pride and lufts of men, we have too much reason to suspect his fincerity, or, at least, to queltion his knowledge concerning the use and improvement that ought to be made of it : for afterwards we will find his zeal fpent. not in detecting any real corruptions or abuses of that doctrine, but in recommending and defending an imaginary scheme of his own, altogether inconfistent with fuch an improvement thereof, as can afford any folid peace or comfort to the fouls of men, for whole benefit it was revealed. and to whom it is fet forth in the gospel, as a fore foundation for their faith, hope, and confidence before God to rest upon, while deprived of any other, or to use his own phrase, which is abundantly proper, "thoroughly pinched with the impossibility of 44 hope

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"hope on every other fide." He indeed infinuates, that his chief defign in writing to the author of Theren, &cc. was to warn him, and others, of the errors and abuses by which this fundamental article of the Christian faith has been so corrupted and perverted, as to deprive those who are impofed upon by them of its genuine favour and benefit; and has even the affurance to quote. as applicable to his purpole, the words of the great apostle of the Gentiles, who, from his great affection to the Corintbians, among whom he had laboured in the work of the gofpel, and a tender concern for their fpiritual welfare, expressed his fears, left they should be feduced from the purity and fimplicity of the golpel by the fubtil artifices of falle teachers who lay in wait to deceive, addreffing them in this manner; I am jealous over you with godly jealoufy: for I have effou. fed you to one busband, that I may present you as a thafte virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the ferpent beguiled Exe through his fubrilty, for your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

The letter-writer would have us believe, that the opposition he makes to the author of the Dialogues, and his new friends, proceeds from the same godly zeal, and concern

for the fouls of men, that moved the apostle to write in this manner to the Corintbians; but from the spirit that breathes in his letters we cannot help suspecting, that it must flow from a very different principle: for the bitter invectives which he throws out against a number of godly ministers, who preached the same doctrine with the apostle Paul, and who, we have reason to think, were honoured to be instrumental in the conversion and falvation of many fouls, are more like the language of one fretting and gnashing his teeth with pain, on account of the fuccess that attended the ministrations of these worthy men, and any honour and respect that have been, and are still paid to their memory and character by ferious and well disposed persons, than that of one who, like Paul, is fet for the defence of the gofpel, and moved with just indignation against those who by their fond imaginations, or fubril and perverse reasonings, have endeavoured to corrupt the fame.

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belongs to the latter class, and deserves to be placed in the first rank with seducers and perverters of the gospel of Christ, it must be owned that the application he makes of the passage above quoted is extremely impertinent, and that he has wrested it to a meaning quite contrary to the scope of the

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apostle:

apostle; but those who will take pains to examine his letters, and compare the tenets and opinions advanced and recommended therein with the doctrines taught by Paul and the other apostles, will find it no difficult thing to prove the former; they must therefore conclude, that his high pretensions to zeal for the apostolic gospel are both unjust and presumptuous. Had he intended to deal ingenuously, some could have directed him to a passage of Scripture more pertinent, and much better adapted to the scope of his performance, namely, that in the epistle of James; The spirit that dwelleth in as sufferb to envy.

It is well known that error and a malignant opposition to the truth, have often affected concealment under the mask of zeal for the purity of the gospel. For proof of this we need only take a view of some passages in the 11th chapter of the second epistle to the 60-rintbians, from which the quotation formerly mentioned is taken, where the apostle intimates, that there are false apostles, deceiful workers, who transform themselves into the apostles of Christ; profess great zeal for apostles of Christ; profess great zeal for apostles while in the mean time they are using their utmost efforts to corrupt and overthrow

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them. Thus they resemble, and follow the example of that wicked spirit by whose agency they are affisted, in opposing the truths and ways of God; for Satan bimself is transformed into an angel of light.

The author of the letters, after wresting and perverting the words of the apostle +.

• 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, 15

His criticism and reflection on these words of the sportle, andorrog she is to Xperin, which he rendere, fingleness toward Christ, are, no doubt, very just, but grofly milapplied, while he opposes the simplicity, or lingleness of affection toward the one husband therein secommended, not to any endeavour or defire to be juftified by the works of law, but to the very exercise of beliewing on, and receiving Christ, and to every thing that is, or can be supposed to be previously necessary thereto, implied in it or connected with it, yea to the whole work of the divine Spirit in conviction and convertion. In thorn, he opposes the rightesufues of Jesus Christ to the fairs of Jesus Christ, whereby the inspired aptells us, that righteoufness is unto all, and upon all them that believe; or, which we take to be the fame thing, whereby only the guilty finner can receive, or become altually interested in that righteousness; Rom. iii. 23. He would have the divine righteousness to be in such a manner all-sufficient for justification as to superfede all accepts of apprehending and receiving that rightsoufmess, or of using any means for obtaining a perfendingref in it; a notion entirely repugnant both to Scriptere and common sense, and effectually resuted almost by every passage in the New Testament, where there is may mention made of the righteousness of Christ, or of faith in him. Besides, those who duly examine the matter will find, that the letter-writer's extrav

xxxii PREFACE.

Paul and he are on the same side of the question, and that he is animated by the same spirit that insluenced the great apostle to contend earnestly for the faith and purity of the gospel, with great considence begins his attack upon the popular preachers, sig-

Imaginations in regard to this point are as inconfiftent with, and do as effectually overthrow his own fcheme, as that which he professes to oppose; whence it is easy to see that there is no manner of sense in his reasoning on this head.

His remark on the passage above-quoted, a Cor. xi. 3. is evidently intended to discourage from any diligent use of the means of grace, which the Lord Jesus has appointed for bringing somers to the faving knowledge of himself, and to vilify that work of the divine Spirit upon the heart which is supposed to be preparatory to the spiritual marriage between Christ and the believing souls with all solicatede and constru about either, as being inconsistent with that singleness of affection toward the one husband which ought kill to be maintained, and a plain indication of some unchaste defire toward another. One might as well argue, that when a bridegroom sends a message to his bride, and a friend to treat with her about the intended marriage betwine them, to perform some necessary offices to her, accompany and conduct her into the bridegroom's chamber, in order to shew her singleness of affection toward her bridegroom, and prevent all suspicion of her having my unchaste desire toward another, she ought to significate massage, spit in the face of the messager, and dismiss him with scorn and contempt. But would such conduct be indeed any proof of chastity? I think it would rether be an evidence of madness, and one of the most signal affronts she could possibly put upon her lover and bridegroom.

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P R E F A C E. xxxiii

nifying to the author of Theron, &c. that if he had confidered their writings with a more jealous eye, the occasion of his address to him might have been prevented. Here we do not at all question his fincerity; for there is ground to think, that the fingular effeem which that celebrated author professed to have for those Gentlemen, with the ample commendations which are given of their valuable writings in the Dialogues, did, as much as any thing, chagrine him, and work up his zeal to fuch an extraordinary fervour, that he could no longer contain or diffemble his refentment; but found it necessary to bestir himself, and, by all the bitter invectives, reproaches and calumnies which his malice could invent, endeavour to blacken the reputation and defame the memory of those worthy men. But as their persons are now beyond the reach of his impotent

To some it may appear surprising, and even unaccountable, that the letter-writer should have shewed
such a malevolent disposition toward some eminent ministers of the gospel, who were justly esteemed burning
and shining lights in their day; but the very epithet of
popular preachers, which he so frequently gives them,
thereby intending to throw an adium on their memory
and character, will serve to unriddle a great part of the
mystery, to such as know any thing of the temper and
disposition of a certain Gentleman, to whose modern
imaginations Palaemon and his brethren are chiefly indebted for their ancient apostolic gospel: for with his
notions they have also imbibed his spirit.

XXXIV P R E F A C E

attacks, and their characters too well known and established to be greatly hurt by his invidious infinuations; so we doubt not but their excellent writings will be read with profit and satisfaction, and be the savour of life unto life to many, when his scurrilous performance is buried in oblivion, or, at best, reserved only as a monument of that strong delusion and horrid infatuation, which some are, in the righteous judgment of God, given up to, because they have not received the

love of the truth.

Palemon is so charitable as to suppose, that the author of Theron, &cc. got his first taste of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity from higher and purer sources than the writings of the popular preachers; and we have equal reason to think, that the preachers whom he most warmly opposes, imbibed their fentiments concerning religion from the pure fountain of the divine oracles; and that their books and fermons were, through the divine bleffing, of no small advantage to the author of the Dialogues in studying and fearching the Scriptures, and in forming those clear and diffinct conceptions of the leading doctrines of the gospel which are so rappily expressed in his excellent writings. That valuable author had not, like his antagonist Palamon, read the discourses of the popular preachers, merely, with a defign to criticile

criticife and cavil, but " with a fingle view " to the edification of his heart in true faith, "folid comfort, and evangelical holiness "," therefore we need not wonder though these had very different effects upon them. It might indeed feem strange, that those truths and doctrines of the gospel by which some are instructed, comforted and nourished up to eternal life, should be rejected, loathed and contemned as mystical fancies, palpable absurdities, idle and unmeaning jargon, &cc. by others, had not the apostle informed us, that the preaching of Christ crucified was to fome, even in that early period when the preachers were not only popular but inspired. foolishness and a stumbling block; while to others it was the power of God, and the wifdom of God; and that the same doctrines of the gospel which to some were the favour of life unto life, were to others the fayour of death unto death +.

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The letter-writer, who professes great sasisfaction on finding the grand article of imputed righteousness so clearly and warmly supported in many of the dialogues between Theron and Aspasso, after observing some palsages in which the author endeavours to make a suitable application of his doctrine, pretends to have been so alarmed, that, in

Theren and Afpafio, Vol. III. p. 358. 4th edit.

MANO PREFACE

the warmth of his zeal, he could not forbear expressing himself in this manner, " Alas! " how is the fine gold become dim! Has our favourite author then at last fo far " loft fight of the imputed righteoufness, as to mix another with it? Has he fo imbaraffed, or rather flut up our access to the divine righteoufness, as to hold forth a preliminary human one, as fome way expedient, or rather necessary, to cour enjoying the benefit and comfort of it!" The eye must be strangely ringed indeed, that can fee any thing in the speeches and reasonings of the humble and evangelical Afpafio that will bear fuch a construction, or that can, with any shew of reason, be adduced for supporting such a charge. What means this clamour against Afpafio? Has he indeed fo far forgot himfelf as to maintain, that not the ungodly, but the righteous are warranted to claim the benefit and comfort of the divine righteoufness? Has he any where affirmed, that any good done by the finner, or wrought in him, or any good qualification he may be supposed to be possessed of, be it works or Taith, conviction, humiliation, or any thing elfe, can in the least recommend him to God. or afford him a better claim to the benefit of the divine righteousness, than the most guilry, and the very worst of mankind are suppoled posed to have by virtue of the general and indefinite call of the gospel, addressed to all finners without exception? No; but he has offerted, that till men are convinced of their fin and mifery they will never perceive the excellency, nor yield to take the benefit of that righteoufness which in the gospel is revealed from faith to faith. And, farther, he has endeavoured, as his divine Master and his apolles did before him, to refolve fome doubts, and answer some objections which are apt to discourage an awakened and convinced finner from accepting of the gift of righteourners which is brought near to him in the gospel, so as to rest his hope of justification and eternal falvation wholly upon the same. In short, Afpasio teaches, that sinners must believe on the name of the Son of God in order to their being justified by bis blood; or that it is not to every one, but only to them who receive Christ Jesus the Lord, that he gives the power, or privilege, to become the fons of God, even to them that believe on bis name.

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These are the things for which Aspasso must be condemned, as having thut up our access to the divine righteousness, and, by an inexculable inadvertency, adopted the fentiments of his new friends the popular preachers, fo as to corrupt and pervert the gospel of Christ. I am persuaded, that none but the letter-

EXEVNI P R E F A C E.

letter, writer, and men of the fame extraordinary penetration with himself, will think, that Afpafio, in his dialogues with Theron on the weighty points above-mentioned, is chargeable with any think more criminal than a laudable endeavour to act some way agreeably to the commission which ministers of the gospel have received from their great Lord, who has in a very folemn manner, commanded them to go through the gates, to prepare the way of the people, to cast up the high way, and gather out the stones ": which we prefume may, without any straining, be inperpreted of their explaining the doctrines and promises of the gospel to their hearers, and accommodating the fame to their varirious cases and circumstances, in such a manner as to endeavour the removal of all those impediments and flumbling blocks which Saran and their own unbelief are apt to lay in their way, when burdened with a fense of quilt and fears of wrath; fo as to discourage and deter them from coming to the Lord Tefus Christ for life and salvation; or from resting their hopes of acceptance with God, and everlasting happiness, wholly upon his righteoulness revealed in the gospel. And when Afpafio expresses his tender sympathy with his friend Theron under his convictions.

PREFACE. XXXIX

and while perplexed with doubts and fears about his own spiritual condition, and not fully clear as to the warrant he had to take the benefit of the divine righteousnes; and, at the same time, endeavours to remove his difficulties, and encourage him firmly to rely upon Christ's finished work, as being a fure foundation for the most guilty and wretched linner of mankind to build his confidence before God, and hope of falvation, upon; it may be a sufficient apology for him, that, in doing fo, he only follows the example of his bleffed Master, concerning whom it was faid, that he should not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smaking flex : and who in his humbled state, on all occasions, treated not only weak and doubting believers, but also distressed and desponing finners, with great tenderness and com-passion, calling and inviting them, in the most affectionate manner, to come to him for the redress of their grievances, and relief from all their fears and burdens +. But however innocent and well-meant any thing the author of the Dialogues has put in the mouth of Aspasio may be, unhappily for him, his adopting the fentiments of his Scotch friends, and the great regard he has expres-

Ifai. zlii. 3. + Matt. xiv. 31. Luke viii. 47, 48. Mark. ix. 24, 25, 26, 27. Matt. xi. 28.

fed for their writings, have exposed him in fuch a manner to the refentment of the capricious Palemon, that nothing can excuse him from being ranked with the votaries of

a perverted gospel. To make some amends for his harsh dealing with Aspasso, the letter-writer compliments the author of Theron, &c. by profelling to have great fatisfaction in agreeing with him in his just difregard of scholastic terms, which, he fays, have ferved to confound the plain truths of the gospel. But whatever distike that author might express of some terms used in the schools, which having been ill chosen, and impertmently applied, have indeed tended rather to imbarass and perplex the mind of the reader, or hearer, than to convey any clear idea of the truth, it is evident, that Palemon and he are fat from agreeing in their fentiments concerning this matter. For, as is ufual with the leaders of every new fell, under the pretence of rejecting the terms hatched in the fchools as improper, Palemon has endeavoured to throw an odium upon, yea, shewed the utmost contempt of fome precious truths of the gospel, that have been clearly and happily expressed by feme of those terms and phrases which he would have to belong to the unmeaning jargon of the schools; an artifice which, we have ground to think, the innocent Aspasio never

never dreamed of. The terms covenant of works, application and appropriation of faith, supernatural and irresistable operation of the Holy Ghost in conversion, union and communion with Christ by the implantation, and inbabitation of his bleffed Spirit, inberent grace and boliness, &c. we have reason to think, are among the terms which the letterwriter would have discarded, as tending to obscure and confound the plain truths of the gospel; though it is evident, that it is not so much the terms, as the important truths usually expressed by them, that he diflikes, and has fuch a strong aversion to. As the author of Theron, &cc. and he, therefore, must differ very widely in their fentiments about the propriety and use of those terms, when he compliments that author by professing to agree with him in this matter, we can hardly commend his ingennity, or he had no design to impose upon his readers. But we shall find afterwards, that it is no uncommon thing for this author to speak ambiguously, and by his words to intend formething very different from the fense which an innocent reader would be apt to put upon

It was once my intention to have attended the author of the letters wire wiles, and to have confidered the contents of each

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letter by itself; but as it would be a very unpleasant talk to follow this extraordinary writer through all the mazes of obscurity, myfticifm, ambiguity and inconliftency, in which he endeavours to intangle the ignorant and unwary, upon fecond thoughts, I changed my resolution; apprehending it would be more for the benefit of the reader, and less trouble to myself, to collect some of the principal heads of his new doctrine into one fuumary; which being carefully reviewed and examined, one may easily form a judgment concerning the scope and tendency of his whole scheme. I have therefore comprised what I take to be the substance of what he has advanced in opposition to what he calls the popular doctrine in a few articles, which, fo far as I have been able to apprehend the meaning of those loose reasonings and affertions with which his letters are fil-led, contain his leading fentiments on the most material articles in debate between him and his antagonists. It must indeed be acfuch a mift of ambiguity and obscuricy almost upon every subject he treats of, as makes it very difficult to know what are his real fentiments. And as there is scarce any particular notion advanced by him which he himself does not contradict in some part of his letters, and the most of his cavils and Stee by Sep. fophif-15344

fophistical reasonings against the doctrine taught by his opponents might be used with equal, yea far greater advantage against what would appear to be his own scheme it may be justly questioned whether he has any fixed principles at all with regard to the several points in controversy between him and those whose doctrine and sentiments he so ungenerously endeavours to expose.

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He is pleased to charge some eminent preachers with attempting to obscure the simple truth, and conceal their own real fentiments by deceitful circumlocutions and ambiguous modes of expression; and tells us, " that Proteus could never affume more shapes, or change them with " greater dexterity, than these men do, in " order to evade and oppose the revelation of divine grace "." It is not easy to perceive any thing in the writings and fermons of these excellent men, who appear to be the chief objects of his refentment; that can give any just ground for such accusations; they for the most part bearing visible marks of fincerity and undifguifed fimplicity; but perhaps there was never a writer more culpable in all these respects than himself: for he has buried almost every subject he touches upon in such ambiguity and obscurity, that

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Letters on Therow, &cc. p. 315.

it is often very difficult to know whether his words have this or that meaning, any meaning or no meaning: and, by the help of a little art, they may be so explained as to admit of a sense quite opposite to that which one would take to be their genuine and, obvious fignification. And the whole scheme may be turned into almost as many different shapes as you please. For though, at first view, it would feem to be laid in opposition to fome dangerous corruptions of the Christian doctrine, especially concerning justification through the imputed righteoulness, it may be fo explained as to favour either Pelagianism or Antinomianism, Socinianism ot Popery. Yea, one might eafily form a creed out of it containing the substance of all the herefies " just now mentioned, in fo far as they relate to faith, justification, regeneration, conversion, familification, Sec. As to the article of justification, netwithstanding all his pretended zeal for the purity of the Christian doctrine, it + plainly coincides with the old

† Our author's scheme of principles, if it may be called so.

Polemon, who hates or bodony both name and thing, loves berefy but hates the name, will probably laugh at the expression, and be apt to rank me for using it with a fet of men he calls berefy bunters, whom he bears no good will to; but as I can perceive no impropriety in the term, I have ventured to use it, as many better men than either of us have done before.

PAR E FI AI CIEL XIV

Popifo doctrine on that head, as we hope af-

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The many frong things which the letterwriter feems to affert concerning the fovereignty of divine grace, and his high pretensions to zeal for the doctrine of justification through imputed righteousness, being only calculated to blind and amuse the mind of the reader, will not prove him to be more orthodox than the most bigotted Papists, with regard to the article of justification, but thew that he is less ingenuous than they. As the most zealous advocates for the Popish doctrine on this head still taught, that any certain hope of the forgiveness- of fins, or any particular, or personal claim to the divine favour or mercy, must, at least in part, be founded upon, or fpring from charity and good works, by which, according to them, faith is informed and perfected; they had more ingenuity and discretion, than, in direct contradiction to this fentiment, to affirm, that the guilty are justified by faith alone for that the righteourness of Christ imputed is the only ground of our acceptence with God. The former of these opipions Rolemon afferts almost in as strong terms as any of them can do; for he maintains, that any affurance, or perforal hope of falvation, or even of the favour of God and the remission of fins, that believers are polfeffed anoistico.

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fessed of, does wholly arise from a consciousness of their own love to the truth and selfdenied obedience; and accordingly he denies, that there is any foundation laid in the
gespel for a siducial apprehension of the mercy of God, or any personal hope of salvation; and plainly insinuates, that neither of
these can be well supported, or warrantable,
till persons have been for some time engaged
in a course of self-denied obedience; that
is, they can have no well-grounded hope of
receiving the benefit of the divine righteousness, till they are possessed of such qualifications, as may embolden them to claim, accept and possess it.

Now this, if I mistake not, is the very same thing with the old Popis notion concerning justification by works, or partly by saith and partly by works; yet the letter-writer has the assurance to pretend an uncommon zeal for the doctrine of justification by faith alone. But however inconsistent this author is with himself, it must be owned he has discovered no little art in affering with great considence, and professing more than ordinary regard for those truths, in one part of his performance, which he attempts to overthrow in another: for as he has in this manner done much to conceal his real semiments, so, by the help of a little sophistry, he may make shift to explain his erroneous positions.

PROEAF A CHELL xlvii positions, in such a manner as to put a sense upon them very different from what one would take to be their natural and obvious meaning. Thus he endeavours to deceive the simple reader, and has actually imposed upon some, of whom other things might have been expected; but it is hoped, the more judicious will easily perceive the artifice, and escape the snare which he has laid

for the inattentive and unwary.

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In the short abridgment I have given of the leading articles of this author's creed, I have put no construction upon his words and affertions, but what feems eafy and natural: and the fentiments I have ascribed to him are either delivered in his own words, or, after the most impartial examination, gathered from the plain scope of his reasonings against his antagonists; so that he must either own them as his, or acknowledge that his reafonings against his adversaries, on the several points expressed in the articles, are no better than vain jangling, or rather a heap of loofe affertions thrown together without any meaning, and to no manner of purpole, if it is not to throw an odium upon his opponents, and beget prejudices in weak minds against them.

In framing creeds and confessions of faith it has been usual to subjoin some Scripture proofs, for confirming the several articles of

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Alviii PREAFARCE

which they confift; accordingly I have attached a few texts of Scripture to each article of Palamon's creed, which, if read, as he tells us some read the Scriptures; backwards, will serve well enough to support it; but if understood and explained according to their obvious sense and meaning, as far as I am able to judge, will effectually overthrow it.

This method may appear fomewhat preposterous; but as it is evident, that Palamon must have read several texts of Scripture backwards, there is fome ground to think, he must in the same manner have confirmed the feveral articles of his extraordinary creed; and it is hoped, he will not blame another for endeavouring to ease him of that trouble. The articles I have placed in one column, and the texts of Scripture in the other; and I leave the intelligent reader to judge of the harmony Betwixt them. I have afterwards subjoined a Review and Examination of each article by itself. Some perhaps may think the remarks are too prohir: but when it is confidered that the author of the letters has wrote to myffically and ambiguously almost on every subject he treats of, that it is often very difficult to find out and afcertain his real meaning; and that it was needful not only to detect the feveral gross absurdities, and pernicious errors in his scheme which he endeavoured to conceal

PREFACE. xlik conceal from the view of his readers, but also to cliay an illustration and vindication of those important truths which he has used his utmost efforts to obscure, pervert and overthrow, all which could not callly be done in a few words. I presume the judicious reader will allow, that I could not well have contracted them, or brought them within a much narrower compass.

If my hould think I have recased the letter writer with too much leverity on fome occasions, I need make no other apology for any thing of this kind, than he himfelf furnishes me with in the following wor "The highest decency certainly requires, if that the difference betwint what is hely found what is profane should be fet forth in the ftrongest colours; ospecially when the greatest pains are taken to make that difference disappear to confound huma efforts with the divine righteousness, to confound the froth of human pride with lowing passage in a letter from Junius so Protos, an author whom, I suppose, Palemon will be loth to contradict. " I think et it ridiculous to find fault with the fpirit of a writer, if his doctrine be just and " true ; for to me it is evident that if he

Letters on Theres, &c. p. 87-

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he :r" spirit is faulty, it must be owing to some " error in doctrine. I am not displeased to

" fee a man, in matters of the highest impor-

" tance, holding what he holds, in the most " tenacious manner, or opposing what he

" condemns, with the utmost vehemency: " I am rather pleased to see a man in good

" carneft, and not playing fast and loose in magnification of

" facred things "."

The first of those sayings is whimsical enough; yet while the author adheres to it. I apprehend, he will have no just cause to complain of any tough creatment I have given him t. I have no reason to bear any all-will to his person, as he is a stranger to me, and never did me any particular injury; but the cause he is engaged in, the princi-ples he has adopted, and the tenets he endeavours to defend, I think merit no indulence, and cannot be fet out in too ugly

I have given the reader a shortview of the fentiments of some of the most eminent Protestant divines, particularly those who

Law of Nature defended by Scripture. Junius to

Protos, let. 2.1 p. 3.

A just severity in detecting, and reprehending seminates and fills teachers — is warranted by a greater authority than that of Palemon, namely, the authority of the impired apostle, who says, Rebute them sharply, that they may be found in the faith. Tit. 1.13.

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were honoured to be chiefly inftrumental in restoring the purity of gospel-doctrine, after it had been, for ages, buried in a cloud of Antichristian darkness and error, on most of the points in debate between Palemon and his antagonists: not as if I reckoned their authority of sufficient weight to prove an article of faith, or give a fanction to any doctrine not clearly taught and established in the Sacred Writings; but because in their writings some of the most important cruths of the gospel are clearly proved from Scripture, happily expressed, judiciously explained, and pertinently applied; and to shew that Aspasso and his brethren teach the same doctrine, and walk in the same spirit and steps with those renowned champions for the truth, who, by blowing the filver trumpet of the everlasting gospel, were made the happy inftruments of demolishing the walls of the Antichristian Jericho; of rouling many out of that spiritual and pernicious lethargy which they had been thrown into by the stupifying potions of the mother of barlots, and abominations of the earth; and of levying that heroic army of martyrs and confessors, who appeared with such undanned courage and intrepidity in defence of the truth, not fearing to expole themselves to the most grievous sufferings, and the most cruel deaths, in that glorious cause.

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II PREFACE

In fuch company, compassed about with fuch a cloud of witnesses, those who teach the same doctrine with Aposto may securely contemn the impotent attacks, fournful smile, and securely reflections of such a writer as Palemon.

a Mothinks the author of the Defesce of Theron and Marie diforers too much complaifancy, or rather a kind of abject rimidity, when he compliments the author of the letters on Theren, &c. to far as to make an
apology for his conduct, and, which is yet more, acknowledge his fault in professing an agreement, in some
fundamental articles of the Christian faith, with the late
Mest. Erstines and the Secreting ministers in Stational,
according to Scripture, and the judgment of all lound
Pratefiant divines, and in quoting a few passings from
a fermon presched by Mr. Elsia. Erstines; as if he had
thus made Mest. Erstines, and the Societing ministers,
with other Pratefiant divines, the vouchers of his creed,
and given a manifest proof of his yielding implicat faith and given a manifelt proof of his yielding implicit faith to their dictates and fentiments. Is it a crime, then, to yield obedicate to our Lord's command in going forth by the foresteps of the flook, Cast, i. 8. We see manifelt we are exherted to follow, confidence the end of their conversations. Heb. xiii. 7. Multimented to refer to keep the unity of the faith is the bond of the source of t found to be; accounted effectial to the therefore a a true believes and reputalic Christian? What pary is it, that man should lafter themselves that to be battered out of their religion, and resion too, by the locatful and fensels reflections of one of the most uniting, though one of the most arroyant writers that this, or perhaps iny age has produced? The PREFACE

The wild reveries of this author concerning the formation, conflictution and government of the Christian church, of which we have such a large collection in his fourth let. ter as fills near 70 pages, I think merit no regard; and therefore, I have nor taken any particular notice of them. After he has discovered such a strong inclination to subvert some of the most important articles of the Christian doctrine, and thus to rob the church of those precious truths of the gofpel which are the only foundation of her faith, hope and comfort, it cannot be fupposed, that his sentiments on any other subject, will have great weight with any lover of the truth. On the contrary, it may ferve greatly to confirm fuch as delice to keep the way of the Lord, in a day of general apoftaly, by adhering to the purity of religion and reformation once attained to in these kingdoms, with regard to the government and discipline of the church, as well as doctrine and worthip when it is confidered that those Separatiffs in Stolland, who first distinguished themselves by Uning their cadeavours to pour contempt upon that glotious work of Reformation set on root by our worthy ancestors in the last age, have tions, in the righteous judgment of Go been left to thew no left oppolition to the practous doctrines of the goldel which we c 3 ment 1

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IV PREFACE

the special means of overthrowing the kingdom of Antichrist, and dispelling those mists of error and heresy which had for many ages overspread the whole Christian world.

This verifies an observation which has been fometimes made, namely, that when the hedge of government and discipline, which the glorious Head of the church has appointed as a fence about her, to preferve her from the dangerous incursions of the beafts of prey, is once broken down, the purity of doctrine cannot long be maintained. It were to be wished, that the desperate attempts made by those new Sectaries in the neighbouring kingdom, among whom the letterwriter makes such a distinguished figure, to obscure, undermine and subvert the Protestant doctrine, throw a veil of Antichriftian darkness upon the most important truths of the gospel, and sap the very foundations of Griffigher, might be the means of opening falves to be fo far blinded with prejudices count that form of government which the Lord Jelus has appointed to be observed in his house, for maintaining purity, order, unity d harmony in his church and among his lowers; as to account it a matter of ininterency, and what may either be retained dispensed with by Christians, as may best uit their different inclinations and interest

However lightly some, otherwise well-disposed, may think of the government and discipline of the church, as if it was a matter of very small moment, whether this or that, or any other form of external government be observed in her, provided men be sound in the faith as to what are called fundamentals, or the essentials of Christianity, I make no doubt, but, upon inquiry, it will be found, that the neglect and contempt of the former have been no less prejudical to the souls of men, than those errors and herestes which have been vented in opposition to the latter; and indeed those never fail to open a door and make way for the reception of these.

Left our author should complain, that I have intangled him among texts of Scripture, as he alledges the popular preachers are wont to do , such of these as I have occasion to refer to. I have, for the most part, marked at the bottom of the page, which he may therefore consult, or not, affect thinks proper; yet, if duly attended to. I am in hopes, that they will not only intangle him, but confound him, stop his mouth, and keep him from ever opening it again in such blasphemous talk against the beavers, against the truths, works and ways of God.

bluttel & Letters on Theron, &cc. p. 98.

as we meet with in his letters on Theren and Alogio, However, this we may be certain of, that all his attempts to obscure, disguise and pervert the gospel of Christ, will, as the like have ever done, iffue in the farther clearing up of the truth, the disappointment and confusion of its opposers, the honour of God. and the joy and confirmation of all who know and love the truth. As the fun never thines more brightly than after he has been for fome time under a cloud; so however truth may for a time, be eclipsed and enveloped in a cloud of erroneous and heretical cies, it will, at last, work itself clear of them all, and thine with a more firiking and refulgent splendor than it did before. It maye ambwill be opposed as long as the great! industry in this lower world, but it will at left be victorious ones exter and all opposition. Greates the south and will prevail.

The following remarks I submit to the judgment los the impartial and judicious, defining that no regard may be paid to what I have advanced farther than, after the state test examination, it is found agreeable to the Santal Gracies, and the analogy of faith. I have the candid reader will make allowance for defects of style and other inaccuracies of a like nature. If what is offered should be of the for undeceiving any who may

have

have been imposed upon by the deceitful. artifices whereby the author of the letters has endeavoured to darken perplex and overthrow the true doctrine of the grace of God; for keeping others from being feduced by his fallacious and fophistical reasonings; or for vindicating those important truths of the gospel which he has attempted to pervert and profittute, and establishing any in the faith of the truth, in which they have been instructed; it will be a sufficient recompence for what trouble I have undergone in following this extraordinary writer through some of those tiresome and gloomy paths of mysticism, ambiguity and error in which he endeavours to intangle his unwary and ignorant readers

There are many combinations formed against the cause and langdom of Christ in our day; but those who have the interests of Zion at heart, and preser Jerusalem to their chief joy, may comfort themselves with this consideration; that the multitude of all the nations that sight against Mount Zion, including, among others, all hereticks and subtil underminers of the truth, shall be as the dream of a night vision. The Lord Jesus must reign till be bath put all his enemies under his feet; and in the mean time, upon all the glory, up-

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on all the truths, ordinances and institutions of Christ, and upon all his faithful servants and soliowers, there is, and shall be a defence.

Goe, for learing others from song frouced by his factions and aspartical realenings, or for virginity those introoffant truths of the goipel which he als attempted to pervert and produtute, and allabilithing and allabilithing in which they been allated at wal on a fufficient factorisence for whitelinouble I have undergone in following this exercically writethrough force of those tireforms and gloomy preligion myllicito, and come and gloomy mylich he endeavours to intangle his unwary

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THE Scripture no where gives us fuch an account of the nature, perfections, or works of God, as warrants us to affirm or believe, that he is a pure spirit, or a spiritual and incorporeal substance.

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John iv. 24. God is a

Luke xxiv 39. — A spirit bath not sless and bones—

I Tim. i. 17. —The King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wife

Deut. iv. 14, 15. Take good beed unto yourselves (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb—) lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you—the SIMILITUDE of ANY FIGURE—

Rom. 1. 22, 23. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools: and changed the glory of the uncorruptible Gad into an image made like to corruptible man-

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What has been commonly raught and believed among Christians concerning a covenant of works made with man in a state of innocency. to which fystematic writers. and many other Christian are wont to poole the covenant of table, but hurtful; and a diffinction, ulually made betwixt the covenant

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Rev. xxii. 9. Worthin GOD.

Matt. iv. 10. Thou Malt worship the Lord thy God, and HIM ONLY Shatt thou ferve.

Ifai. xlv. 22. Look unto me, and be ye faved, all the ends of the earth: for I AM GOD, and there is none elfe.

Gal. iv. 8. Then when ye know not God, ye did fervice unto them which by nature are no Gods:

Heb. i. 8. But unto the Son be faith, Thy throng O God, is for ever and our.

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Gen. ii. 16, 17. The Lord God commanded the man, faying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat : But of the tree of the knowledge of good and wil, thou shalt not cot = of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou Shalt furely die.

Gal. iii. 12. The law is not of faith: but the man that doth them shall

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Matt. xix. 17: If thou will enter into life, keep the commandments.

Rom. iii. 19. Now we know that what things foever the law faith, it faith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be flopped; and all the world may become guilty before God.

Rotti. v. 12. As by one man fin entered into the world, and death by fin; even so death passed upon all men, for that all bave sinned. Ver. 14. Adam—the figure of him that was to come.

Rom. iv. 15, 16. The law worketh wrath —
Therefore it (the promife, or the inheritance, ever-lasting happiness typified by the earthly Canaan) is of faith, that it might

This plainly flows, that it cannot be the Mofaic law, the Sinaitic commant, or the old covenant made with Ifrael, that is how meant; for those having been peculiar to Ifrael, the whole world, or all mankind, were never under them; and therefore could not be convicted by them, or be rendered obsoxious to the judgment and wrath of God on account of the breach of them. By the law here spoken of, therefore, must certainly be understood the law or covenant of works made with innocent Adam, as the head and representative of all mankind.

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Money wise by: Friend

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Natural reason, aided by the external revelation of the gospel, or the dictates of a natural conscience, compared with the revealed reason of hope, are fufficient to bring men to the true knowledge of God, and confequently to everlafting happinels, without any special or internal operation of the divine Spirit upon their minds and hearts. ion condett, andily

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The depravity of human nature chiefly confifts in that strong pro- of man was great in the in every man to flatter IMAGINATION OF THE

be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the feed:

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I Cor. ii. 14. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto bim's neither can be know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

John xvi. 8. He (the Holy Ghost) will convince the world of fin, &c.

2 Cor. iv. 6. God wbo commanded the light to Shine out of darkness, bath shined in our bearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart also will I give you, &cc. .

John vi. 44. No man can come to me, except the Father Which bath fent blesse established by metident bins first part that is how patent a first trail is a strike have

Gen. vi. 5. And God fru that the wickedness penfity that is naturally | earth, and that EVERY .ba dome THOUGHTS

his pride, by inventing or adopting fuch notions concerning the method of acceptance with God, as tend to beget, and cherish in him a deceitful fense of his own dignity and importance; from which nevertheless, by duly attending to the evidence of divine truth revealed in the gospel, and comparing it with the natural and infallible dictates of conscience, he may diffictangle himfelf, and acquire a fet of notions or principles, which will become as it were a new inflinct in him; fuch as in the gospel is called regeneration or the new creature, and is the only fpring of all true holiness, love and obedience to God. AMORETE SE THE THE VIEW OF THE PROPERTY OF THE

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There is no need of any internal, supernatural work of the Spirit of God upon the souls and hearts of men for discovering and subduing

THOUGHTS OF HIS
HEART was only evil continually. Compare chap.
viii. 21.

Ephes. iv. 18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

Tit. i. 15. Unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and CONSCIENCE is defied.

John iii. 4. Except a man be born again, be cannot feethe kingdom of God.

Ephes. ii. 10. We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. A now Spirit will I put within you—I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.

SCRIPTURES.

pons of our warfare are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high that corruption which is naturally in every man, and reigns in every unregenerate finner; but if they only hearken to the voice of God in the confcience, and admit the fimple truth revealed in the gospel, it is all that is necessary for those purposes.

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thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Luke v. 17. The power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Plal. cx. 3. Thy people fall be willing in the day of thy power.

John vi. 36. Ye alfo bave feen me, and believe not. Vcs. 45. Everyman —that bath beard, and bath LEARNED OF THE FATHER, cometh unto me: Compare John xiv. 26. xvi. 14. Acts xvi. 14. 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. &c. &c.

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by the law is no way necellary in order to a believing on Christ for righteousness and salvation, it is idle to affirm, or suppose, that by the law is the knowledge of se, or that ever the Spirit of God makes use of it as a mean for convincing sungers of their guilt and misery, or of their need of Christ and salvation; for it cannot be

SCRIPTURES.

Rom. iii. 20. By the law is the knowledge of fin. Chap. vii. 7, 8, 9. I had not known fin but by the LAW.—For without the law fin was dead —I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, fin revived, and I died.

Acts ii. 37. When they

Acts is. 37. When they beard this they were pricked in their beart, and faid unto Pater, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and

of the least advantage to an unbelieving finner in any of these respects: and those who exhort men to fearch and try their ways, by viewing them in the glass of the divine law, that they may be made fenfible of their fin and guilt, of the milery and danger of their condition, and confequently of their need of mercy and falvation, through Christ revealed and exhibited in the gospel, do only cut out work for the pride of the devotee, and teach men to establish a righteousness of their own in a new shape, under the deceitful notion of working their way toward that of Christ.

ARTICLE VIII.

Unbelieving finners ought never to attempt yielding obedience to the divine law; and to exhort them to the exercise of faith, repentance, prayer, and the diligent use of the outward means by which God ordinarily communicates his grace to the children

do?

Gal. iii. 19. Wherefore then feroeth the law?

It was added because of
transgressions, till the feed
should come, to whom the
promise was made—Ver.
24. Wherefore the law
was our schoolinaster, to
bring us unto Christ, that
we might be justified by
faith.

Rom. i. 18. The wrath of God is revealed from beaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.—Chap. ii. 3. Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and dost the same, that thou halt escape the judgment of God?

SCRIPTURES bis

William English All Moon

Ifai. Iv. 6.17. Seek je the Lord while he may be found, call ge upon him while he wicked for fake his way, and the unrighteen man his shoughes: and he him return to the Lord, and he will have morey upon him, and to our Gol, B 4

children of men for their conviction, conversion and falvation, is only to administer food to their pride, and teach them to do, or acquire fomething, on which they may found fome peculiar claim to the favour of God and the benefit of the divine righteoufnefs, or which may furnish them with a ground of glorying before God over other men. be he charte hims burney entire

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mon, that judged then

The gospel, being only an historical account of fome plain facts relating to the death and refurrection of Jefus, includes no offers, or promises, of the remision of fins, or eternal falvation through him, nor indeed any calls of race directed to unbe- falem. eving finners of manand . - I to the second

for be will abundantly pardon.

Prov. i. 22, 23. How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the fcorners delight in their feorning, and fools bate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Comp. chap. ii. 3, 49 5: 100 pol

. Matt. iv. 17. - Jefus began to preach, and to fay, Repent, for the kingdom of beaven is at hand.

Mark i. 15. Repent ye, and believe the gofpel, &c. &c. a ni muo allat do elen

SCRIPTURES. WAT

Luke xxiv. 46, 47. He faid unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer. and to rife from the dead the third day : and that repentance and remiffion of fins should be preached in bis name, among all nations, beginning at Jeru-

John vi. 32. - My Father GIVETH YOU the true bread from begoen. Acts ii. 39. The PRO

grant kar.

MISE

MISE is unto YOU, and to your children, and to ALL that are afar off, even AS MANY AS THE LORDOUR GODSHALL CALL.

Chap. xiii. 34. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I WILL GIVE YOU THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID. Ver. 38. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is PREACHED UNTO YOU THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. See Heb. iv. 1, 2. Rev. iii. 18. Ifai. Iv. 1. John vii. 37. Prov. viii. 4. &c. &c.

ARTICLE X.

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The promise, call, or testimony of God in the gospel, do no more lay a soundation for any assurance, or hope of salvation to sinners, for whose benefit they are published, than the secret purpose of God: for men have as good reason to believe their election to everlasting

SCRIPTURES.

Rev. xxii. 17. The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that beareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come: And WHOSO-EVER WILL let him take the water of life freely, Comp. Isai. lv. 1. Matt. xi. 28.

Acts xv. 11. We believe that through the B 5 grace

PALEMON'S CREED, &c.

life at first instance, as to believe on Jesus Christ for life and falvation, or indeed to believe that they shall reap any benefit by his righteoufness and death.

ARTICLE XI.

A STATE OF THE PARTY OF

There are no mysteries in the gospel, or in the Christian religion, that can juftly, or with any propriety, be fo called, on any other account than because they were formerly veiled and concealed under fome types, figures or parables; and this is the only reason why any divine truths are called mysteries in the New Testament.

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grace of the Lord fefus Chrift, WE SHALL BE SAVED even as they.

Deut. xxix. 29. The fecret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us -

SCRIPTURES.

I Cor. ii. 7. We fpeak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Ver. 10. God bath revealed them unto us by his Spirit : for the Spirit fearcheth all things, even the DEEP THINGS of God.

Col. ii. 2. - The MYSTERY of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.

1 Tim, iii. 16. Wetbout controverfy great is the MYSTERY of godlines: God was manifest in the flesh, &c.

Rom, xi. 33. O the depth of the riches both of the wildom and knowledge of God! How UNthat he seems a first SEARCHABLE are bis STATE OF STREET judgments, and his ways past finding out!

ARTICLE XII.

Justifying faith is nothing elfe but the simple belief of the bare truth, that Jesus died and rose again, or that he gave himself a ransom for many, without including any perfualion, that the finner himself is warranted to rest his hope of pardon, acceptance with God, and eternal falvation, upon the righteoulness and death of Christ; or that ever he shall have any benefit thereby.

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SCRIPTURES.

Acts xv. 11. We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, WE SHALL BE SAVED, even as they.

1 John v. 10, 11. He that believeth not God, bath made bim a liar, because be believeth not the record that God gave of bis Son.

And this is the record, that God HATH GIVEN TO US ETERNAL LIFE: and this life is in his Son.

Rom. xv. 12, 13. There shall be a root of Tesse, and be that shall rufe to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles TRUST.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in HOPE, through the power of the Holy Gboft.

Ifai. xlv. 24. Surely, shall one say, IN THE LORD HAVE I RIGH-TEOUSNESS AND STRENGTH.

John i. 12. As many as received bim, to them gave he power to become ARTICLE XIII.

MERGERY.

Tuffifying faith is no act of the mind, nor does it include in it any kind of activity.

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the fons of God, even to them that BELIEVE ON HIS NAME, &c.

SCRIPTURES.

Ifai, xlii. 1. BEHOLD my servant whom I upbold, &cc.

Heb. xi. 13. Thefe all died in faith, not having received the promises, but baving SEEN them afar, off, and were PERSUA-DED of them, and EM-BRACED them - Comp. ohn i. 12.

John v. 40. Te WILL NOT COME TO ME, that ye might have life.

Mai. Iv. 5. Behold, thou Shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee Shall RUN unto thee -

Heb. vi. 18. Who bave FLED for refuge to LAY HOLD upon the hope fet before us.

ARTICLE XIV.

Tuffifying and faving faith does not include in it any appropriation, or particular application of Christ, his righteous- Israel a Saviour, Jesus - ness and the benefits of Men and brethren, chilhis purchase, nor, indeed,

· SCRIPTURES.

Acts xiii. 23-26-34 -38. Of this man's feed, hath God, according to bis promise, raised unto dren of the flock of Abraham.

deed, any other or farther improvement of them, than what is included in the fimple knowledge and belief of some historical facts recorded in the New Testament; such as, that Christ died and rose again, gave himself a ransom for many, and made an atanement for sin.

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SUMMATURES.

ham, and whosever among you feareth God, TO YOU is the WORD OF THIS SALVATION fent.

And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead — he said on this wise, I WILL GIVE YOU the sure mercies of David. — Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is PREACHED UNTO YOU THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Isai. xlii. 6. I the Lord bave called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand — and GIVE thee for a COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE, for a light of the Gentiles. Compare Chap. xlix. 6.

Rom. vi. 23. — The GIFT of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, &c. &c.

ARTICLE XV.

from death area life.

The Area of

No kind of trust, affiance, or confidence in the promise and mercy of God through Christ, belongs to the nature of justifying faith; but a man may

SCRIPTURES.

Rom. xv. 12. — In him shall the Gentiles TRUST. Comp. Matt. xii. 21. Psal. lxxviii. 21, 22. A fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also

may truly believe the gospel, yea attain to a full affurance of faith, without putting the leaft confidence in the divinepromise or mercy; or believing that he is at all warranted to do fo, till by his own felf-denied labour of charity, &c. he has acquired fome peculiar claim to the divine favour and forgiveness; or, at least, something upon which he may warrantably bottom an affurance of both.

ARTICLE XVI.

The fins of believers do not only make them liable to some fatherly chaftisements in this life. but expose them to the curse of the divine law. and the wrath to come; yea render them no less obnoxious to both, than the fins of other men, who are yet in an unjuftified state, do them : and every one who maintains the contrary, or that believers, being already in a justified state, are no more liable to condemnation, is ignoalso came up against Israel; because they believed not in God, and TRUSTED not in his falvation.

Pfal. xxviii. 7. Lord is my strength, and my field, MY HEART TRUSTED IN HIM, and I am belped -

John xiv. I. - Ye believe in God, believe alfo.

in me, &c.

Ephel. i. 12. That we should be to the praise of bis glory, who first TRUST-ED, or hoped, in Christ.

SCRIPTURES.

John v. 24. Verily verily I say unto you, be that heareth my word, and believeth on him that fent me, bath everlafting life, and SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEM-NATION; but is passed from death unto life,

Rom. viii. 1. There is therefore now NO CON-DEMNATION to them which are in Christ fe-

sus-

Heb. xii. 5-12. Ye have forgotten the exbortation which speaketh unto you as unto children,

My

rant both of the gospel and of the true God.

My fon, despise not thou THE CHASTENING of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him, &c.

Isai. liv. 9.—I have fworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor re-

ARTICLE XVII.

There is no abiding principle of grace implanted in the hearts of believers by the power of the Holy Ghoft; nor is there any such thing as inherent or subjective grace, on account of which any one man can justly be faid to be more holy than another.

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SCRIPTURES.

Jerem. xxxii. 40. I will put my fear in their bearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Heb. viii. 10.— Awill put my laws into their mind, and write them in their bearts.

Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. A
NEW HEART also will I
giveyou, and a NEW SPIRIT will I put WITHIN
you — And I will put my
Spirit within you —

Spirit within you —
John iv. 14. — The
water that I hall give
him, shall be IN HIM a
well of water springing
up into everlasting life.

I John iii. 9. Whoforver is born of God doth not commit fin; for HIS SEED REMAINETH IN HIM—

I Cor. vi. 11. Te are

ARTICLE

Market Land

Ally form which ever week there ARTICLE XVIII.

It is abfurd to fuppofe that unbelievers, or men in an unregenerate fate, ought to pray for the holy Spirit to help them to the exercise of faith or any other grace; and believers have no occafion to pray for his illumination, direction or affiftance, in any case; they being already furnished with a fet of principles fufficient to direct them in every good path, or how to form their hearts and lives fuitably to what the Lord requires of them; and being able of themselves, without any fo- after God. reign or supernatural affiltance, to perform what is the good, acceptble, and perfect will of to the state of the state of the state of

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Matt. vii. 7. Ask, and it shall be given you: feek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened un-

to you.

Luke xi. 13. If ye, then, being evil, know bow to give good gifts unto your children: bow much more shall your beavenly Father give the boly Spirit to them that afk bim?

Jerem. xxxi. 18. Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.

Pfal. x. 4. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not feek

Pfal. cxix. 18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

Ver. 34, 35. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, yea, I shall otherve it with my whole beart.

Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, &c. &c.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE XIX.

A believer has no occasion to consider himfelf as being under any obligation to yield obedience to the divine law: nor can it be of any advantage to him in regulating his practice and conversation.

A STOR WHO IS BUT

ARTICLE XX.

Believers, on account of their good works performed after convertion, may justly claim eternal life, not only as a reward of grace, but also as a reward of debt; yea, every honest or fincere attempt to please God, is fufficient to found a title to everlasting happineis.

SCRIPTURES.

Pfal. cxix. 104. Thro' thy precepts I get understanding : therefore I hate every falle way.

Ver. 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Rom. iii. 31. Do we then make void THE LAW. through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish THE LAW.

1 Cor. ix. 21. Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. Rom. xiii. 7, 8, 9, &c.

SCRIPTURES.

Rom. iv. 13. The promife that he should be the beir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his feed THROUGH THE DAW, but THROUGH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS FAITH.

Gal. iii. 18. If the inberitancebeof the law, it is no more of promise: but God Gave it to A-BRAHAM BY PRO-MISE.

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PALEMON'S CREED, &c. 18

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Rom. vi. 23. The gift of God is eternal life, through Jefus Christ our

Chap. xi. 6. And if BY GRACE, then is it no more OF WORKS : otherwife grace is no more the All the book which is the grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwife work is no more work. der what was the first

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PALEMON'S CREED

Reviewed and Examined.

ARTICLE L

THE Scripture no where gives such an account of the nature, perfections, or works of God, as warrants us to affirm, that he is a pure spirit, or a spiritual and incorporeal substance.

REMARKS.

If OUGH, the author of the Letters does not affert this in so many words, it is the native and necessary consequence of his dockrine; as must be evident to every one that will take pains to consider and examine the explication he gives of that well known text of Scripture, John iv. 24. "He affirms with great considence, "that "Jesus did not intend to surnish the woman of Samaria with a metaphysical idea of spiritual sub"stance abstracted from matter," and adds, "that "the Scripture no where gives us any idea of spirit, but as acting in some place or body." Hence it is plain, that according to our author, in full consistency with what the Scripture teaches concern-

Letters on Theren, &c. p. 118.

ing the nature and attributes of God, we are at liberty to conclude, that the Deity is a being, or fubstance compounded of body and spirit; that he has a bodily shape and bodily parts, as really as man has, yea, that he never was without a body.

Thus, by one bold stroke Palæmon has attempted to overthrow, not only one leading article in all the confessions of faith emitted by the Proteflant churches, but what has been constantly taught in the Christian church since the days of the Apostles. But it needs not at all surprise us, that any confideration of this kind should have little weight with this extraordinary writer, who, on all occasions, professes a hearty contempt for all creeds and confessions of faith, though compiled by the purelt churches upon earth, and for most of the doctrines that have hitherto been taught in the Christian church. Yet, since he has thought fit to give his judgment in direct opposition to what has always been accounted afundamental article of the Christian faith, it might have been expected that he would have offered forme reasons in support of ity or, at leasty have attempted to take off the force; and thew the weakness of those arguments by which feveral eminent divines have endeavoured to prove, that the accounts given in Scripture concerning the nature and perfections of the Deity are incompatible with, yea entirely repugnant to this notion of a corporeal fubitance afcribed to the divine Being. But firong affertions without the least fladow of proof, it feems, are all we must expect from fuch an infallible writer as Palemon. He feems to have taken it for granted, that on account of his uncommon fagacity and penetration, he might-claim the fame freedom that he fignifies he was disposed to allow the author of Theron, &c. namely, " as ample freedom in writing, as the Bat. " Roman

Whatever freedom he might be inclined to allow that celebrated author in writing, he took care to grant it upon this condition only, that nothing should be advanced contrary to his own favourite hypothesis. But perhaps he imagined, that a regard to his superior genius, uncommon abilities, and zeal for the apostolic gospel, would prevail with his readers to dispense with any reserve of that kind as to himself. However, it is hardly to be supposed, that such as are acquainted with the spirit of this author, and his manner of writing, will be disposed to pay any great regard to his bare affirmation, or adopt his sentiments without proof and due examination,

When he afferts, that the Scripture no where gives us any idea of spirit, but as acting in some place or body; and infinuates, that these words of our Saviour, Ged is a Spirit, ought not to be understood, as they have been usually explained by Christian teachers; his observation is either wholly important, or he must mean, that the Scripture no whete warrants us to conceive of the Deity as

acting or existing without a body

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Now, may we not take the liberty to ask, whether this body, in which we must suppose the Deity always to have acted and existed, even before the creation of the world, is a created or increated body? If it should be alledged, that it is a created body, the letter-writer must allow, either that the divine Being was wholly inactive before it was created, or that the inspired writings warrant us to conceive of God as acting without a body; for we presume he will not deny, that the Scripture warrants us to conceive of the Deity as existing from

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eternity. If it should be faid, that the body in which he must be supposed still to act is increated, then it must belong to his nature and essence, so that he can no more be without it, than cease to be. Thus we must conceive of the divine nature as a substance compounded of body and fpirit, in the fame manner as man isv And, as it can never be truly affirmed of any material fubitance or body, that it is infinite, omnipotent, immenfe, immutable, &c. if Palemon's notion is admitted, we must allow, that the Deity is a finite and changeable being, and confined to a certain place, or that it can only be in one place at once; or, which is equally shocking, that he is partly finite, and partly infinite, partly motable, and partly immutable, partly limited, fo as to occupy but one place at once, and partly omnipresent and immense. Yet this last notion, however absurd in itself, will not consist with the letter-writer's hypothesis; for if it is granted, that omnipresence and immensity are attributes of the divine Spirit, still we may, and must conceive of it as acting without a body, or where there is no body; or, which is equally absurd, the divine Spirit multibe supposed to exist where it neither acts nor

Upon the whole, the notion that Palamon would instil into the minds of his readers, is, that God le not a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, of miliprotent and immends, as the Scripture every where teaches, but a corporeal substance, or, as best, a substance compounded of body and spirit; an opinion so gross and absurd, that a sober and intelligent heatten would be alhamed of it. Something like it was afferred, and strengously maintained by Epicarus and his disciples but for this they were decided, and their absurd notion frequent-

ly refuted by the more judicious among the heathen philosophers. One Audeus, a Syrian monk, and his followers, in the fourth century, did also give no small disturbance to the Christian church bycertain reveries of this kind, who from thence were called Anthropomorphites; and the fame opinion was revived and recommended by some of the disciples of Socious, particularly by John Biddle, an English Socinian, about the middle of the last century. His wild and monffrous notions concerning the divine nature are largely and judiciously refuted by the learned Dr. Owen, in his answer to a small track published by the faid Biddle, under the name of a Scripture-Catechifm.

Those who will take pains to read and consider the preface to that catechism, will find that Mr. Biddle has been a gentleman of much the fame fpirit and temper with the author of the Letters on Theren, &c. and that he endeavoured to subvere the doctrines of the gospel, then commonly taught and professed in the Protestant churches, by the same artifices which Palemen makes use of for undermining the doctrines that have hitherto been generally taught and believed in the Christian church concerning faith, juftification, regeneration, fanctification, &c. Yet it must be owned, that Mr. B- feems much inferior to the letter-writer in arrogance and malice, and that he does not take the liberty to ridicule and scoff at serious religion, nor use that indecent freedom in treating of facred things, which is familiar to the gentleman we are now dealing with. However, for his impious notions concerning the nature and attributes of God, the learned Doctor above-mentioned ranks him with the worlt kind of idolaters, and accounts his monstrous opinion little better than downtight Atheism. His words are thefe: " Mr. B. charging that upon the Scripture,

Scripture, which hath been renounced by all the Heathens, who fet themselves studiously to fol-46 low the light of nature, and by a first enquiry "to fearch out the nature and attributes of God! orincipally attending to that fafe rule of afcribing " nothing to him, that eminently included imper-4. fellion, hath manifested his pretext of meer christiff anity, to be little better than a cover for down-"I right Atheifm, or at best, of most vile and unworthy thoughts of the divine Being." The fame judicious divine afterwards expresses himself in the following manner. "The Holy Ghoft, speaking in the Scripture concerning God, doth not " without indignation suppose any thing to be "likened or compared to him. Maimonides hath observed, that these words Aph Ira, &c. are never attributed to God, but in the case of idola-" try; that never any idolater was fo filly, as to " think that an idol of wood, flone, or metal, was a "God that made the beavens and the earth, but " that through them all idolaters intend to wor-66 thip God. Now, to fancy a corporaity in God, or "that he is like a creature, is a greater and more " irrational dilbonaux to him than idolatry. To whom will ye like God, or What likeness will ye compare to him? Isai. 18. Have ye not known, have ye not beard, buth it not been told you from the beginning, have ye not understood from the foundation of the earth? It is he that south upon the circle of the earth, Sic. To whom then will be liken me, or shall I be equal, said she hely One?
wer. 21, 22, 25, 7 Again, says the Doctor, "As this madness of brain-lick men was always rejected to be all persons of sobriety, protessing the religion. " by all perions of fobriety, profeffing the religion of Jelus Christ, fo was it never embraced by the · Vindein Evangelice, &c. p. 62. † Id. p. 67.

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" Jew

"Jews, or the wifer fort of Heathens, who retained any impression of those common notions of God, which remain in the hearts of men*. The Jews to this day do solemnly confess in their public worship, that God is not corporeal, that he hath no corporeal property, and therefore can not thing be compared with him. So one of the most learned of them of old: O'ert yas as Sporting and papers of Sios, ours Stought an Spainten value. Phil. de opisicio mundi. Neither hath God an human of form, nor does an human body resemble him."

1. **Formation**

1. **Jews, or the wifer fort of Heathens, who retained any impression of the compared with him. So one of the most learned of them of old: O'ert yas as Spainten of the compared with him. The compared with him of the compared with him. The compared with him of the compared with him.

Vindiciæ Evangelicæ, &c. p. 71.

+ What were the fentiments of the wifer fort of Heathen philosophers on this head, will appear from the following extracts, taken out of the writings of some of them.

Θείν με νεήσαι χαλοπόν, φράσαι δι αδύνατον. τό γας ασώματον σύματι σημήναι αδύνατον. καὶ τό τίλιου το ατελίι καταλαδέσθαι ε΄ δυνατον. And again; 'Οφθαλμος μεν γας τα σύματα θεατώ, γλώθη δι τα όρατα, λευτώ, τὸ δὶ ασώματον καὶ άφανές, καὶ ασχηματιτον, καὶ μέτε ἐξ ὅλης ὑποκέμανον, ὑπό των ημετέρων ἀισθησιών καταληφθήναι ε΄ ὅλναται. Έννοῦμαι ε΄ τατ' ἐποῦμαι, ε΄ ἐξειπεῦ ε΄ δυνατόν, τῶτό ἐγιε ὁ Θεός. Μercur. ad Tat. ap. Stobæum, fer. 78.

As the whole passage is too long to be transcribed and translated here, I shall only observe, for the sake of the English reader, that the scope of it is to shew, that the divine Being, which is eternal, incorporeal, immaterial, immortal, and absolutely or infinitely perfect, cannot be perceived by human sense, nor fully described by human speech or language, nor indeed comprehended by any finite understanding.

The words of another ancient author to the same purpose are as follow: To do is it is appearance, being it was the service and artis tag to down dancountains, Calicrat, apud Stob. ser. 83.

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Palemon having, according to his usual modefty, rejected that interpretation of our Saviour's words, John iv. 24. which has hitherto been generally received among Christians, and which one would think, while words are supposed to have any determinate fignification, must be allowed to be the most native and genuine, has thought proper to favour us with one of his own which is truly extraordinary; such a piece of mysticism as I am perfunded would puzzle one of less penetration than himself to unfold, or make any tolerable sense of. This gentleman is pleased to tell us, " that our Lord is evidently instructing the woman of Sa-" maria about the character of God, as where he delights to dwell, and manifest his presence;

Bic Jede to de Section and an Sporeson plays ros, Otre depus Degroious quoties, ad sonica.

Xenoph. in Clem. Alex. firom. 5.

Raperte Denvier ras Dede neal pen donne cor acres commence na derinas.

Æschyl. ap. eundem, strom. 5.

Plate voluit fine corpore ulle Deum effe, ut Graci dicunt

eguaror. Cic. de Natura Deorum, lib. 1.

Aristotle, though he afferted the eternity of the world, was far enough from maintaining that gross notion, concerning the Supreme Being, which Palemon, treading in the footheps of his old friend Mr. Biddle, would flily inftil into the mind of his reader; for he every where describes God to be an intelligent and incorporeal fubftance.

Orde accipance designe. Diog. in vita Aristot. To reporter

'Es più दिका सकाने को बांडिकार बेरिक, केंग्र दिका बांगुर्त अवो नवहिंद,

and interest inter naturam Dei & nostram? Nostri merior pars animus oft, in ille nulla pars extra animum.

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" where he is to be approached to, and found proco pitious:" and that " he gives her to understand, that the true character of God, was the spirit of what the Yews and Samaritans contended about: and that this spirit was soon to be fully es exhibited, and had even now already begun to appear in view, viz. in his own person, with " whom the was then converting." And hence he thinks " we may warrantably conclude the sense to be, that the true and full exhibition of the divine " character and presence was only to be found " in the person of the Messiah." If this gloss is admitted, the text must be thus paraphrased; 'God is the true character of God, or the true and full exhibition of his own character and presence in the person of the Messiah.'——He that is made wifer by fuch an exposition may rejoice therein.

To support this interpretation, the letter-writer tells us, "it is observable, that spirit and truth are " used in this passage as words of a like import " illustrating each other." But as the words spirit and truth in the latter clause of the verse evidently. denote the nature and quality of that worthip which God requires of men, though it should be granted that they are words of a like import, it is not easy to conceive how his exposition of the first clause of the verse can be supported thereby : for, whatever should be meant by spirit in the beginning of the verse, it is plain that it is affirmed of God the object of worthip. And if he should alledge, that the word fpirit must be taken in the very same sense in both clauses of the verse; when it is faid, God is a spirit, the meaning must be, ' that God is the fpirit, or rather spirituality and truth of that worthip he requires of men: which inflead of supporting, or illustrating the interpretation formerly given, would land us in down-right ab-

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furdity. Palæmon is pleased to add, " that if the " foirit and ultimate scope of the divine abode in the " temple of Jerufalem had not been manifested the " grand things concerning that temple would not " have been verified." That the temple of old was a type of the Meffiah, and the symbols of the divine glory and presence exhibited therein, intended to teach us, that God shews himself propitious to finners of mankind only in Christ; and that it is only in him they can find acceptance, or have any comfortable meeting with God, is readily granted: but to offer any thing of this kind in support of the strange gloss our author has thought fit to put upon these words of our Saviour, God is a spirit, is such a method of reasoning, as, I

think, surpasses all comprehension.

From hence it would appear, that, according to our author, Jesus intended to teach the woman of Samaria, that God was the spirit and soope of his own abode in the temple of ferufalem.' is such a sense of the passage as, I believe, few, but fuch critics as Palemon, would have dreamed of. One would think, that he, who has been pleased to entertain his readers with such an obfeure and mystical interpretation of one of the plainest texts in Scripture, had little reason to grudge the popular preachers their use of the word myflery; for I am persuaded there are few passages in any of their writings, that, for obscurity and mystiwords of our Saviour above-mentioged. What he further observes concerning the use and signification of the word spirit, In the New Testament, is no way to the purpole; as it only proves, that Christ Jesus was the great anti-type, prefigured by all the types and ceremonies belonging to the Mofais occonomy, or, to use his own words, the **fpirit** .

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fpirit and scope of the Mosaic institutions; which was never denied by any found Protestant that I know of. And though it should be allowed, that the interpretation which he gives of the Apostle's words, 2 Cor. iii. 17. is genuine, which yet may be doubted, it will not prove, that the word fpirit is never used in any other sense in the New Testament, or that it must be taken in the same fense, John iv. 24. when it is abundantly evident, that fuch a fense is no way agreeable to the scope of the place; where our Lord, from the difficulty started by the woman of Samaria concerning the place where such solemn acts of divine worthip ought to be performed, as God required to be performed only in the place which he had chosen to put his name there, takes occasion to instruct her concerning the nature of God, and also concerning the nature and effentials of that worthip which he requires, and only will accept of. It is plain, that thus he intended to correct a very dangerous miltake, too common at that time both ameng the Town and Samaritans, who were apt to imagine, that they fufficiently acquitted themselves in the worthip of God, by the performance of fome external duties, or the observation of those rives which were either prescribed in the law of Moses, or handed down and received by tradition from their fathers; thus overlooking, neglecting, and giving themselves no concern about the spirituality of worthip. In order to this, our Lord instructs the voman concerning the nature of God, the glorious object of worthip, who, being a spirit or spiritual substance, requires another kind of worldin than that which confifts merely in bodily exercise, or a few external performances. And further, to thew the folly of refting contented with the observation of external rites and ceremonies, he intimates, 30 PALÆMON'S CREED Art. I.

that those ritual institutions, even such of them as had the sanction of a divine appointment, were not necessary or essential parts of the worship of God, but only adjuncts or appendages of it, which might be taken away, and were soon actually to be abolished, without any diminution of that honour and worship which is due unto God the great object of worship, who is pleased with, and will accept of no acts of worship, but those that are performed in spirit and in truth, or with the heart.

and in fincerity.

This is a simple and easy view of the words; an interpretation that requires no straining of eriticism to support it: and, indeed, no other can be admitted without offering violence to the text. I am the more consistmed in this opinion, as Palemon, with all his skill in criticism and sophistry, and after straining hard to explain away the true sense of this passage, hath so unhappily sailed in his attempt, as not to be able to fix upon any other sense of the words, but what is so intricate and perplexed as to be altogether unintelligible. Society made a like attempt before him 7, and with equal success: for some of his most learned disciples, however obsequious to him in other things, in this sound it necessary to desert him, and

Faufus Socious, who never made a scruple of fraining any passage of Scripture, to an agreement with his own favourite hypothesis, and pre-conceived opinions, made bold to supply the verb (nrs), instead of irs, and would have the words to run thus: God re-entres, or seeks, a spirit. Which interpretation is quite forced and unnatural, does no way agree with the context, coherence of the words, or scope of the place, and makes the whole verse to be nothing else but an uninstructive tautology, or idle repetition of what went before.

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admit the usual interpretation of the passage now under consideration, as the most native and genuine*. Yet the gloss which Socieus put upon this text, though very unnatural, bold, and sophistical, is far from being so absurd and nonsenfical as that of our author.

As the gross and monstrous opinion concerning the divine nature, which the letter-writer has endeavoured flily to inftil into the minds of his readers, having a manifest tendency to fap the foundation of all religion, and perfuade them, that what they have hitherto been taught from Scripture to believe concerning God, as being a spiritual and immaterial substance, an independent, infinite, omnipresent and unchangeable Being, is only the result of some philosophical notions, borrowed from the schools, gives us no favourable idea of his Theology; fo, from the great pains he has taken to obscure, wrest and pervert one of the plainest texts in the Bible, we have too much reason to suspect his ingenuity when commenting upon the Scripture, and that any attempts of this nature

made

Crellius, a learned Socinian, commenting upon this passage, speaks in the following manner: Significate Christus id, quod ratio ipsa dictat, Deum, cum spiritus sie, non niss spiritualibus revera delectari: That is, "Christ" thereby intimates, what reason itself dictates, name"Iy, that, as God is a spirit, he takes no delight in "any worship but what is spiritual." Crell. de Deoseu de vera Relig. Lib. 1. cap. 15. The same author does also thus express himself: Spiritus est Deus: animadvertunt ibi omnes prope S. Literarum interpretes, Dei nomen, quod articulo est in Græco notatum, subjecti lacum tenere: vocem spiritus, qua articulo caret, pradicati: et spiritualem sognificare substantiam: ita perindo est, ac si dictum suisset, Deus est spiritus, seu spiritualis substantia. Ibidem.

made by him are intended, rather to support some favourite notion he has thought fit to adopt, than to give the reader a just view of the scope and sense of the several passages he pretends to explain. In this case, they must be more credulous than wife who admit the ftrange gloffes he has been pleafed to put upon certain texts of Scripture, without enquiring into the true and genuine import of the passages themselves, by comparing them, and confidering their connection with other parts of revealed truth. The neglect of this is one reason why many filly and unstable souls are apt to be carried away with every wind of new doctrine, and become an easy prey to seducers, especially those conning impostors who are so areful, as, by a little fophistry and false colouring, to disguise and disfigure the plainest truthe, so as to make them appear odious and ridiculous; and at the same time recommend the most pernicious errors and monstrous opinions under such plausible pre-texts, as will make the simple and unwary admit them for undoubted truths. By thefe and the like artifices the letter-writer has endeavoured to undermine, and subvert some of the most important truths and doctrines of the gospel, and to recommend his own wild scheme of principles; but these who will carefully examine his peculiar tenets and opinions at the bar of the facred oracles, will foon perceive the fraud, and thus escape the snare which he has laid for the ignorant and injudicious reader.

We now proceed to the confideration of another article of our author's creed, in which he gives us an account of the object of worthip, and expresses

himself in the following manner.

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THE most full and grand idea of the object of warship that ever was ar will be presented to the thoughts of angels or men, is that as A GLORIFIED MAN EXERCISING AND DISPLAYING EVERY DIVINE PERFECTION: and all who in worshiping God base not their minds fixed on this object, may very warrantably be said to worship they know not what.

Interested R.E.M. A.R.E.S.

out territory with his li-A S I do not find, that the author of the letters, A Sec. has any where in his performance taken unon him expressly to contradict the Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity, to impuga the true and supreme Deity of Jesus Christ, or deny the hypostatical union between the divine and human nature in his person, I am not a little surprised, that he should have chosen to express himself in this manners which smells rank of the Sociain error coneerning the person of Christ. If by the man Christ is understood the person of Christ, God-man Emmanuel, it is no doubt true, that he is the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory; and the expressimage of his person, in which all his infinite perfections are fully displayed and manifelted; and fo a perfect image loing nothing of the original in the representation; and in this rehave the comment of the field of the search of the

Letters on Thorn, p. 119.

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fpect he is the object of divine worship equally with the Father and the Holy Ghoft. But if by a glorified man exercifing and difplaying every divine perfection, is meant the human nature of Christ considered abstractly, or as separated from the divine; this cannot be faid to be a true and perfect image of the Deity, nor to be the object of worship at all,

and far less the highest object of worship.

As the human nature of Christ is still a created nature, to affirm, that it is capable of exercising and displaying every divine perfection, and is the object of worthip, the highest object of worthip, would be blasphemy, and lay a foundation for gross idolatry; for giving that worship to a glorious creature which belongs only to the infinitely bleffed and glorious God. The human nature, which the Son of God has affumed into a personal union with the divine, is indeed the medium by which the infinite perfections and glory of God are illustriously displayed, and manifested to the fons of men ; but it would be a strange method of reasoning, to argue from thence, that an idea of its however dignified and glorified, is the fullest and most grand idea that any can have of the object. of worship. If by an idea of the object of worship the letter-writer had meant only a difplay or manifefiation thereof; and by affirming, " that the most " full and grand idea of the object of worthin that ever was or will be prefented to the thoughts of " angels or men, is that of a glorified man exer-" cifing and displaying every divine perfection," insended no more than to affert, that the most near and full display of the divine perfections and glory shat over was or will be made to man, is made in the face and perfen of Christ; it might be allowed that the fentiment is just; though, at the fame time, it must be owned that the terms in which which he has thought fit to express it, are very improper and abstruse, and such as may be under-

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But after all, as it would be a ffrange abuse of language to put the idea of the object of worship only for the manifestation of it, and the most full and grand idea of the object of worship for the clearest and most full manifestation of it; and by the idea of a glorified man to understand no more than fuch a display of the infinite perfections and glory of God, or to speak in our author's dialect, of the true character of the Deity, as is most adapted to the capacities of finite and weak creatures; his words can hardly admit of a found interpretation. The heavens are faid to declare the glory of God, and the firmament to thew his handy-work; and his infinite perfections are, in some degree, manifested in all the creatures; which are therefore like to many glaffes, or mediums, through which we may behold the glory of the invisible God: but it would be very abfurd, on this account, to call an idea of the heavens and the earth, or of any other creature. an idea of the Creator. Thus though it should be granted, that the nearest and most full discovery of the divine perfections and glory that creatures, men or angels are capable of, is made to them in and by the human flature of Christ as now glorified, and advanced to the highest dignity and perfection that a finite and created nature is capable of; it would be very improper and abfurd to affirm, that the idea of that nature thus dignified and glorified, is the most full and grand idea *

Though the word idea may denote any conception of the mind, even that which is purely intellectual, and bears no affinity to fense or imagination;

of the object of worthip that ever was or will be presented to the thoughts of angels or men.

I cannot conceive what could induce Palemon to Sellow fach an encomium upon the idea of Christ as a glorified man, while he takes no notice of the divinity of his person, if it was not his supposing that the nearest and most immediate display of his divine glory, and the glory of his Father, is made to finite understandings in and by his human nature. But though this thould be admitted, from what has been already observed it appears, that it will by no means warrant his affertion; that " the most full and grand idea of the " object of worship that ever was or will be prefented to the thoughts of angels or men, is that "of a glorified man, &c." for, whatever discovery of the perfections and glory of God is made in and by the human nature of Christ, our views must never terminate in the medium by which they are manifested, but rise as high as to fix upon the divine person of the Son of God, or upon IMPOVAN, the Three-one God, whose glory is manifested. And it is evident, that a view by faith of the infinitely glorious God, who is the fole object of religious worthip, must carry us

yet, as it most usually signifies some kind of image, form, or fimilitude of the object which is thereby represented to the understanding; when we speak of God the object of worship, and of divine things, I think it would be lafer to lay afide the use of it altogether. It is more of the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth; and when we speak of ideas of God, of Christ, of the object of worship, &c. it is apt to occasion airy and vain speculations concerning those things which we can have no fuitable views, or conceptions of, but by faith, in the light of the word and Spirit of God.

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When the Scripture teaches us to conceive of the Son of God, our bleffed Redeemer, as a divine person, as God manifest in the stesh, the great God our Saviour, God over all bleffed for ever, JE-HOVAH, the independent, felf-existent and eternal God s it certainly instructs us to form higher and more noble conceptions of him, than can be supposed to be included in the idea of a glorified man; who, confidered fimply as fuch, is not the object of divine worship at all, much less the highest object of worship, For though the man Christ is the object of worship, yet he is so, not as man, but as a divine person denominated from his human nature, which never had any feparate sublistence, nor can warrantably be conceived of, but as personally united to the Son of God: our author, indeed, in the description be is pleased to give us of what he calls the most full and grand idea of the object of worthin, befides the idea of a glorified man, includes that of one exercifing and displaying every divine perfection. But when he speaks of a glorified mon exercifing and displaying every divine perfection, the reader must be at a loss to know, whether he means any more than fuch a deified man, as the Socinians acknowledge Jesus Christ to be, fince he rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. For though they deny the true and supreme Deity of the Son of God, and that he had any existence before his incarnation; they allow that after his

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¹ Tim. ili. 16. Tit. ii. 13. Rom. ix. 5. Ifa. xlv. 24. Jerem. xxiii. 6.

. Tunc cum Christus Deo similis factus effet per divinas que in ipso erant qualitates, summo jure eatenus Dei filius, qua Dens, & vicissim eatenus Deus qua Dei filius: at ante obtentam illam cum Deo fimilitudinem Deus proprie dici non potuit. Smalc. Respon. ad Smiglec. cap. xvii. p. 154.

Filium Dei unigenitum offe docent, tum propter fanctificationem, ac missionem in mundum, tum propter exaltationem ad Dei dextram; adeo ut factum Deminum, & Deum noftrum affirmant. Compend. Relig.

cap. 1: p. 2.

Æqualitas Chrifti cum Deo in eo eft, quod ea virgute. quam in eum contulit Deut, ea omnia efficeret, & efficiat, que ipfins Dei funt, tanquam Deus ipfe. Cate-

chism. Racov.

The authors of the Racovian Catechism, having occasion to mention some passages in the Old Testament, in which the same names, persections, works and worship, which are ascribed to the Father, are attributed to the Son likewife, deliver their opinion in the following words.

Adomnia ita responderi petest, ut appareat nullo modo ex iis effici divinam in Christo effe naturam. Etenim aliam ob causam ea, que de Des dicta sunt sub lege, dici potuerunt de Christo sub Evangelio, quemadmodum & dista funt. Nimirum propter illam fummam, que inter Deum & Chriftum eft ratione imperit, peteftatis atque muneris, conjunctionem, que omnia Dei dono confecutum esse Scripture Novi Testamenti passim testantur. Quod fi Scriptura ea tradit de Mofe, eum Ifraelem ex Agypto duxiffe, Exod. xxxii. 7. Et quod Redemptor illius popull fuerit, Acts vii. 35. & de aliis idem, quod de iglo Des apertissime seripeum erat : Cum nec Mofes neque alii tantam cum Deo conjunctionem baberent, quante inter Deum & Chriftum intercest, multo juftius bæc que de Deo primo respettu ditta funt, Christo accommodari poffunt,

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And it is scarce to be doubted but they would grant, that all which the letter-writer affirms concerning the glorified man he speaks of, may, in a certain fense, be ascribed to the Son of God; or that, in respect of the power, dignity, honour and glory which he is now advanced to, he may be faid to exercise and display every divine perfection; while, at the same time, they maintain that he is really no more than a creature. They sometimes grant, that all things were made by him, and that those very works which are ascribed to the Father, whom they call the only true God, may be attributed to the Son also, as God does all things through and by him. And as God exercifes, and displays his infinite perfections to angels and men in and by his works; when they allow, that what things loever the Father doth, the Son may be faid to do likewife, there is no reason to think, but they would readily agree to the defeription which Palamon has thought fit to give us of the person of Christ, when he calls him a glorified man exercifing and displaying every divine perfection.

Protestant divines, when endeavouring to prove the true and supreme Deity of the Son of God, in opposition to Socinians, Arians, and other heretics who impugn it, and thus attempt to over-

poffunt, propter summan illam & arttissmam inter Deum & Christum conjunctionem. Catechism. Racov.

Etiamnum Dominum lesum pro Des cognoscere tenemur; id est, pro es qui in nos potestatem babet divinam, & eui nos divinum enbibere bonorem obstricti sumus. Ibi-dem.

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Potest Deus cui wult communicare sum bonorem, Christo præsertim, qui dignus est tali honore, quique non fine gravissimis causes adorari juhetur in Sacris Liseris. Socin, Disput, de Ador, Christ.

throw one of the most important articles of the Christian doctrine, on which the faith, hope and comfort of the church, and of every true believer in all ages have been built, as upon a fure and immoveable foundation, have ordinarily made use of an argument, to this purpole, taken from that divine worthip which in Scripture is ordered to be paid to the Son, equally with the Father; and this they have urged with so much advantage, as to confound and filence the adverfaries; fo that they have not been able to offer any thing in answer to it, without running themselves into the most palpable and shocking absurdities. But if our author's opinion, namely, that the idea of a glorified man, though policified of every perfection that human nature is capable of is the most full and grand idea of the object of worthin that ever was or will be prefented to the thoughts of angels or men, is once admitted; it mult be granted, at the lame time, that the ascription of divine honours, and worthip, to the Redeemer, is not sufficient to prove the divinity of his perfon, or that he is the true God equal with the Father; and no doubt the gentlemen above-mentioned would reckon themselves highly obliged by such a concession. It would, at least, relieve them from all fears of being hereafter foiled by uled against them, they have been least able to make any pertinent or plausible reply to.

We shall not say, that the author of the letters

We shall not say, that the author of the letters does fully agree with Societies in their perverse opinions concerning the person of Christ, and the object of worship; but we cannot help thinking, that the words by which he has thought proper to express his sentiments on these heads, bear a very savourable aspect towards them, and may

be eafily accommodated to their erroneous notions concerning one of the most momentous articles of the Christian faith. When they speak of Christ as a DEIFIED MAN, or a man exalted to an equality with God, and as doing the very fame works which the Father does, and whereby he displays and manifelts his infinite perfections; they feem to speak every whit as honourably of him as the letter-writer does, when he describes him only as a GLORIFIED MAN exercifing and difplaying every divine perfection. It must be allowed, that in other parts of his book he feems to have found notions concerning the person of Christ, and to acknowledge him to be the true and supreme God, of the same nature and essence with the Father; but he expresses himself in such a vague, ambiguous manner in relation to almost every point he treats of, that it is not easy to know what is his real opinion, or what fense to put upon his words. And it is often as difficult to reconcile one part of his scheme with another, as it is to reconcile many of his notions with the truth, or with the ancient apostolic gospel concerning the person and work of Christ.

But it has been ordinary for the broachers of new epinions to hide their own erroneous notions, or, at least, partly to conceal their sentiments under a cloud of dark ambiguous expressions, and to instit their heretical opinions into the minds of the unwary by sy infimutations and dark surmises. Thus not a sew, sometimes, are gradually and insensibly prevailed upon to conceive favourably of those tenets and opinions which, if delivered in plain words, and cloathed in their native dress, they would have rejected with abhorrence. Such sallacious methods of imposing upon the ignorant are very different from that candor

and godly fimplicity, which were familiar to the apostles, and first preachers of the gospel, in teaching the doctrines of Christianity. They never studied to conceal their real fentiments by the use of equivocal expressions, and sophistical reasonings; but by MANIFESTATION of the truth, commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God * : and, in this, I am inclined to think, some of the popular preachers against, whom our author shews the highest degree of refentment, have endeavoured, as far as fallible men could do, to follow their example. But such writers as Palemon must be allowed to take another method, as this would no way fuit their delign; which is to recommend their own erroneous notions, and whimfical conceits, under the plaufible pretext of zeal for the truth; and this cannot be done without a great deal of false colouring, and sophistical methods of argumentation.

When the letter-writer affirms, that those who in worthipping have not their minds fixed on a glorified man, exercifing and displaying every divine perfection, worthip they know not what, he talks fo myftically, that it is very difficult to know what he means. Had he afferted, that none can have any fuitable conceptions of the object of worthip but those who are enabled, by faith, to behold the glory of God as it is manifested and displayed in the face or person of Christ, the only Mediator between God and man; this is what we would have readily agreed to ; it being evident from Scripture, that God cannot be truly known and enjoyed, or worshipped acceptably, but in, and through Christ the Mediator; and that those who pretend to worship him without an eye by faith to Christ, in whom he has given the most

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clear, full, and glorious display of his infinite perfections, worthip they know not what. But, by his method of reasoning on this subject, it would appear his meaning is, that till Jesus was glorified, and the true character of God, as he is pleased to fpeak, fully manifested in him, none could have fuch a discovery of him, as to be capable of worthipping him in an acceptable manner; and that till then, all who pretended to worthin God, must have worshipped an unknown God, or worshipped they knew not what. If it is really fo, what shall we think of the faints under the Old Testament, or of the apostles and disciples of Christ before he arose from the dead, and entered into his glory; at least of such of them as were not favoured with that remarkable vision of his glory which Peter, James and John had on the Holy Mount? Must it be faid that all those worshipped they knew not what? If it should be alledged, that the faints under the Old Testament, and the disciples before the refurrection of Christ, faw his glory, and the glory of God in him, through the glass of the word and promile of God; I grant they did; but then they had other conceptions of him than these of a glerified man, or of a man that was to be glorified; for they faw his divine glory, beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. - But any conceptions of this kind, according to our author's notion, must be accounted imaginary; because, if we may believe him, there cannot be a higher or more grand idea of the object of worldip than that of a glorified man. Thus it will be difficult to free the apostles from the charge of ignorance, and prefumption in extending or elevating their conceptions of the object of worship beyond what God has been pleased to reveal, or make known; to angels or men concerning the fame. On comparing this with the foregoing article of Palemon's Creed, in which, upon the matter, he ascribes a body to the Deity, one would be tempted to suspect, that he intended to infinuate, that the Scripture does not warrant us to form any other idea of the supreme Being than that of a GLORIOUS MAN; which, however agreeable to the notion of the old Anthropomorphites, and some Socinians in later times, is not only unfcriptural, but impious and blasphemous.

After all, our author's affertions and reasonings on this head of the object of worthip, are to myfrical and unintelligible, that it is hard to know what to make of them; and indeed, when Brickly exsmined, I cannot find that they contain any thing but a jumble, or confused heap of words, without tiden of any determinate fense; and so I leave them, will be shall be pleased more fully to explain himself, and declare his fentiments concerning this matter in fach language as may be intelligible to persons of an ordinary capacity; or till he shall shink fit to emerge out of his favourite depths.

Carl or a to Mar

le may be observed that Palemen has his depels as well as the popular preachers. The depths they speak of are, ral fails ra God, which by the Apostie are called antisymen as bid arra, the deep things of God, and his ways that are intraceable or past finding out, incomprehensible by any finite understanding; but Palemon's depths are depths of error, mysticism, ambiguity and absurding, intended to intangle and overwhelm the simple and ignorant, so as to make them lose all just views of the falutary truths and dottrines of the gospel; and therefore may properly enough be stilled on fails to Lance, or the depths of Saran. distribution belong the first and the second

ARTICLE III.

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W H A T has been commonly taught, and believed among Christians concerning a covenant of works made with man in a state of innocency, to which systematic writers, and mony other Christian teachers, are wont to oppose the covenant of grace, is not only unprositable, but hurtful; and the distinction usually made betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace is so far from illustrating, or helping us to form any clearer or more distinct conceptions of revealed truth concerning our state before God, or the method of acceptance with him, that it has a quite contrary effect, and serves to set aside, obscure, and confound the capital distinction set before us in the apostolic writings betwixt the old and new covenant, or betwixt the covenant ratisfied by the blood of bulls and goats, and the new covenant in Christ's blood.

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REMARKS.

The author of the letters does not, indeed, in express terms deny, that there was any such transaction between God and Adam, as is ordinarily called the covenant of works; yet I think it is evident from what he says, p. 354 of his letters, that he rejects what has hitherto been taught and believed among Christians concerning it, as unnecessary and useless, and is willing to have it exploded as a systematic on scholastic dream. Here again he chimes in with his old friends the Socinians, and their saithful allies the Remonstrants, with others of the same kidney; who, for the sake of some

favourite hypothesis on which they have thought proper to form their different schemes of Christianity, have been bold to affirm, that there was no foederal transaction betwixt God and Adam in a state of innocency; or at least that, in the covenant made with him, he did not sustain the character of a feederal head to his posterity. But as this truth concerning the covenant of works made with Adam, and his foederal headship in respect of his posterity in that covenant, and others nearly connected with it, have been clearly proved from Scripture; and the cavils of those gentlemen against the same sufficiently answered by many Protestant writers; it might have been expected, that the letter-writer would have confidered, and made fome reply to their arguments, before he presumed fo confidently to reject their fentiments, concerning a matter which must be acknowledged to be of very great importance, and nearly to affect the foundations of all religion.

He is pleased indeed to say, that what they teach on this head ferves to fet aside, obscure, and confound the capital distinction set before us in the apostolic writings, betwixt the old and new covenant; but as he hath not told us what that old covenant was to which the new is opposed in the writings of the apostles; whether we are to underfland by it the moral law, or the law of the ten commandments, with its penal fanction, published to the children of Ifrael from Mount Singi; or the whole of that typical dispensation which the church was under before the coming of the Meffish; neither has he offered the least proof in support of his extraordinary affertion concerning the diffinction commonly made betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. To affert or deny, it feems, is enough with this gentleman,

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for he feldom puts himself to the trouble either of proving what he affirms, or confuting what he impugns. And therefore, one would think, it is very ungenerous in him to be fo much offended with others for discovering a sense of their own importance; a piece of vanity which, he thinks, he has reason to charge the popular preachers with, and feverely condemns in them; especially as it must be evident to every intelligent and unprejudiced reader, that there are many paragraphs, yea whole pages in his book from which there is scarce any thing to be learned, but that the author certainly had a very high conceit of his own understanding and abilities. But though a fimple denial might be a fufficient reply to his confident affertions, which he does not so much as attempt to prove, by any fair method of argumentation; it may not be improper to inquire a little more narrowly into what he delivers as his opinion concerning the two covenants of works and grace, and the diffinction ordinarily made betwixt them, which he treats with fo much contempt.

I prefume it will not be denied, that God made man upright; that, as a creature capable of moral government, he was necessarily subject to the law of his Creator, and bound to yield perfect obedience thereto, in whatever way it might be revealed or made known to him; and that he was originally endued with such a perfect knowledge of his Maker's will, as was sufficient to inform him concerning the whole extent of his duty towards him, in the circumstances he was then placed in; as also with full power and ability to yield all that obedience that was required of him. Now it is equally certain, that no obedience he performed, or could perform to the law of his Creator, could of itself merit, or intitle him to any reward or

him ?

The promise of life is not indeed particularly expressed in the account given in the book of Geness of the transaction between God and Adams in the flate of innocency; but it is evidently implied in the threatening of death, which be was to undergo in case of disobedience. Belides, that man had a promise of life made him upon condition of yielding perfect obedience to the divine law, during the time of his probation, is abundantly evident from other places of Scripture, where it is plainly affirmed, or supposed, that perfeet obedience and full conformity to the law of God, were they to be found with any man, would afford him a just title to everlasting life and happiness. This is clearly intimated in the reply which our Lord gave to one who afked him, what good thing he should do that he might have eternal life? If thou wilt enter into life, fays Jefus; keep the commandments The fame thing is evident from these words of the spottle; The law is not of faith; but the man that doth them fool live in them . Should it be alledged, that Paul, in the pallage just now quoted, does not speak of the law that was given to Adam in a state of innocency, commonly called the covenant of works, but of the law that was delivered to the children of Ifrael at Mount Sinai; it is easy to see, that, though this should be granted, it would no way invalidate the argument draws

Matt. xix. 17. † Gal. iii. 12.

from thence to prove, that man had originally a promise of everlasting life, upon condition of his yielding perfect obedience to the law of his Creator. For, though the words might have a special respect to the law published at Mount Singi, that law must be considered as vested with the form of a covenant of works, or rather as a repetition of the law of works delivered to Adam in the state of innocency, in which all mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews, have an equal concern. The law the apostle speaks of, is a law which concludes all under fin and the curse, for the breach of it, and therefore cannot be understood of any law or covenant peculiar to Ifrael: for in that case the Gentiles would have had no immediate concern either with the promises or threatnings of it, because they were never under it. But that the apostle, in that place, is speaking of a law which extends equally to Jews and Gentiles, is evident from the scope and whole strain of his reasoning in that chapter, and other parts of the same epistle : that therefore can be no other than the law of works which was given to Adam in a state of innocency, having a promife of life and threatning of death annexed to it; and which God, for holy and wife ends, did anew promulgate to the children of Ifrael at Mount Sinai.

Several other pallages of Scripture, besides those already mentioned, might be adduced to shew, that God promised everlasting life and happiness to man upon condition of perfect obedience; but as this is denied by none that I know of, it is unnecessary to spend time in proving it. We shall only observe here, that if it is granted, that God gave to Adem, a law by which he and all his posterity were bound to yield perfect obedience to all the divine commands,

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PALEMON'S CREED Art. III. promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatned death for the breach of it; there feems to be no reason for denying that he made a covenant with Adam and his posterity, which may fitly be termed a covenant of works; as works or perfect obedience was the condition, upon the performance of which man would have had a legal claim to sverlasting happiness, according to the promise made to him in that transaction: for a law with a promise of life, and a threatning of death annexed to it, is all that is ordinably meant by the covenant of works which God made with Adam before the fall. Accordingly the covenant of works that God made with Adam, is, in the Larger Catechism compiled by the Westminster Divines, described in the following manner. "The moral " law," or covenant of works, " is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding every one to perfonal, perfect and perpetual obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposi fition of the whole man, foul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he oweth to God and man; promiting life upon the fulfilling, and threatning death upon the breach of it."

There is, no doubt, a difference between this covenant, and the contracts, or covenants, that are usually made between one man and another; as nothing was therein required of Adam but what he was antecedently bound to; and it was not

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Ouest. 93. Thus they describe the moral law, which, with its fanction, they make to be the same with the law given to Adam, or the covenant made with him in the state of innocency. Compare the Anfrer to Queft. 192. -do the feet obedience to all the divine con make.

optional for him to consent to the terms of the covenant or not; but fo foon as they were propoled to him, he was bound to agree to them, and could not without a manifest impeachment of the wildom of his Creator, and contempt of his fovereign authority, with-hold his confent. the terms of that covenant were very advantageous on his fide; what he was fo far from having any cause to object against, that he had much reason to admire the grace and condescension of his Creator, therein manifested; his giving his confent to them must be conceived as no less voluntary than if he had been at full liberty to with-hold it. And as, in this case, there was a mutual engagement or compact between two parties, God and man, which includes all that is neceffary to constitute a proper covenant, we can fee no reason why it may not be so called. The law, with the conditional promise and threatning annexed, published to Ifrael at Mount Sinai, is in Scripture expressly called a covenant, and a covenant which the Lord made with theme; and why may not the law of works given to man in the state of innocency, having the like promise and threatning appended to it, be also called a covenant, fince the reason of this appellation is to be found equally in both?

It may also be observed, that in the New Testament, where an opposition is stated between the law of faith, or covenant of grace, and the law. or covenant of works, the former is most frequently opposed to the latter; not as it was a covenant peculiar to Ifrael, but as exhibiting the very form and tenor, or, as Dr. Owen expresses it, the notion,

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^{*} Deuter. v. 2, 3. xxix. 1. xxxi. 16.

fense and power of the first covenant, or that covenant of works which was made with man before the fall, and which therefore all mankind have an equal concern in. The law with which the gospel, or the covenant of grace, called the law of faith, is ordinarily contrasted in the apostolic writings, particularly in the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, is a law which all men by nature, Gentiles as well as Jews, are supposed to be under; a law which condemns and curies every sinner, for the least violation of any divine precept; and therefore cannot be the Sinastic covenant, merely as such: for this was made with the children of Israel only; and so was a covenant, or law, which the Gentiles could not properly be said to violate, or be guilty of any breach of, so as to be thereby made obnoxious to divine wrath and the curie, as they were never under it.

But though it feems evident from Scripture, that the covenant of works made with Adam, as the head and representative of all his natural feed, was repeated, and solemnly promulgated to the children of Ifrael at Mount Sinai; that they might be awakened to a sense of their fin, guilt and mifery, and so be made to prize the revelation of trace, and excited to make a proper improvement of the promise given to Abraham and the rest of the patriarch's concerning the Mossiah, in whom the family of Abraham, and all the families of the

Recommendatory preface before Mr. Samuel Petto's Treatife concerning the difference between the bld and new covenant.

⁺ See Rom. iii. from the 9th verfe, and downwards; and Galat. iii. throughout.

earth were to be bleffed ; bleffed with a justifying righteoutness, and falvation from the guilt of fin and the curse of the law: yet we are far from thinking, that the repetition of the moral law, as a covenant of works, included the whole of that solemn transaction between God and Israel

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Both the ceremonial and judicial law, doubtless, belonged to the Sinai-covenant, as made with Ifrael; and thus the different views that are given of that covenant in the apostolic writings may easily be accounted for. There was something in that transaction which equally concerned all mankind, and fomething in it that was peculiar to Ifrael. So far as it contained a repetition of the covenant of works, promiting life upon the condition of yielding perfect obedience to the moral law, and threatning death for the least transgression of it, it was not peculiar to the children of Ifrael, but declarative of the natural state and condition of all mankind : and in this respect the new covenant. or covenant of grace, which requires no obedience; nothing to be done or yielded, by finful men themfelves, as a condition of life and falvation; but

Israelitas peccatorum & miseria sua commemoratio, ed Israelitas peccatorum & miseria sua convincendos, ex se ipsis expellendos, de necessitate satisfactionis edocendos, and Christum compellendos: & sic inservit suderi gratia; Rom. x. 4. That is; "The covenant of works was repeated at Mount Sinas, to convince the Israelites of their sins and misery, to beat them out of their self-considence, to instruct them concerning the necessity of an atonement, and drive them to Christ, who is the end of the law for right teousness to every one that believeth: and thus it is subservient to the covenant of grace." Withi. Animadversio. Iren. p. 99.

promises eternal happiness and all spiritual blesfings freely, is constantly opposed to it in the New Testament.

The law to which the Apostle Paul, in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, opposes the promise and doctrine of the gospel, which he calls the law. of faith, is a law that promises life to the obedient, and threatens death to the transgressor, for the least breach of it; and a law which he still supposes all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, to be originally, naturally, and necessarily under the obligation of. It is therefore abundantly evident, that by the law of works we are to understand the cove-nant of works made with Adam, in which all his Buyang specificación de trees di

There is one text of Scripture in which, if the most obvious and natural sense of the words may be admitted, the law of works given to Adam, in the flate of primitive integrity, is expressly called a copenant. The passage is in Hof. vi. 7. which our translators have rendered, They like men base transgressed the covenant; but in the Hebrew it is DANI Ther like Adam bave transgressed the covenant. Thus the very same phrase is rendered, Job xxxi. 33. If I covered my transgressions DIND as Adam: by biding mine iniquity in my bosom. Here there seems to be a plain allusion to what is recorded of Adam, the first man, Gen. iii. 8-12. who, after he had eaten the forbidden fruit, not only fought to hide himself from the Lord God among the trees of the garden; but, when God questioned him about what he had done, endeavoured to palliate and conceal his fip. Though he could not deny the fast, he attempted to cover and excuse the fault: and in this all his posterity are naturally inclined to follow his example. Some learned interpreters, among whom are the authors of our English translation of the Bible, have y

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posterity have an equal concern: and thus far the distinction between the old and new covenant, or between the law of works and the law of faith, and the distinction ordinarily made betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, do exactly coincide; fo that the latter cannot be denied, or fet afide, without rejecting the former, and thus impeaching the wisdom of the Holy Ghost the author of it; to do which would be both impious and blasphemous. When the letter-writer therefore acquaints us, that he has no concern with the distinction betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, on which, he is pleafed to fay, our fystems are formed *; he might as well have told us, that he has no concern with the diftinction which the apostle Paul makes betwixt the law, which has concluded all under fin, and the promise, or the law of faith.

However little concern he may think he has with this diffinction, it is of so great importance to mankind, and a particular attention to it so necessary to the obtaining any true knowledge of God, and of themselves, or any due apprehension of their state before God, that we make no scruple to affirm, that they who are ignorant of it, or imagine

indeed taken Adam, in the first of these texts, for an appellative rather than a proper name; but we see no reason why it should not be understood in its natural, and most proper sense, in that, as well as in the text last mentioned, especially, as this affords a much more plain and easy view of the passage. However, as the stress of the argument is not laid upon the exposition of this single text, if any should still result to admit the interpretation just now given, I have no inclination to contend with them.

[·] Letters on Theron, &c. p. 354.

they have no concern with it, " are ignorant both

" of the gospel and of the true God."

But as the revelation and promulgation of the moral law at Mount Sinai, thewing on what terms men were to expect life according to the tenor of the covenant of works, or rather declaring their guilty and miserable state; that state of condemnation and death which they had brought themselves into by fin; was a very conspicuous part of the transaction between God and Ifrael on that occafion, and fuch a part of it as all mankind were equally concerned in; so that from the condition, the performance of which was required, without the least abatement or defect, as absolutely necessary in order to obtain the bleffings promifed, they might fee the utter impossibility of obtaining life and falvation by their own works; by works of any kind, legal or evangelical; and in the awful curfe and threatnings of the law read their doom, or the dreadful fentence of condemnation they were under on account of their fin original and actual, even for the least breach of the divine law that ever they were guilty of in thought, word or deed : there was also in that transaction fomeshing peculiar to Ifrael, and the then infant-flate of the church: for it included the whole ceremonial law, or all those typical institutions and ordinances th belonged to the Mosaic economy. Hence the apostle refers the Levitual priesthood, (acrisices, offerings for the errors of the people, and other ceremonial inflitutions, to the first or Sinaitic covemant. As all those types and ceremonies had evidently a respect to Jesus Christ, the great antitype prefigured by them, undoubtedly they contained a more obscure and imperfect administration of the

covenant of grace. And as the great defign of promulgating the moral law, with the conditional promife and terrible threatnings annexed, at Mount Sinai, was not to put the children of Ifrael upon feeking life by their own obedience to the law, but to flew, that, without a perfect righteoufness, answering all the demands of the law, neither they nor any belonging to the human race could have any title to everlafting life and happiness, or any promifed bleffing; fo by the ceremonial law. and typical facrifices superadded thereto, they were directed to feek that righteousness in another, namely, the Meffiab, the feed promised to Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth were to be bleffed. It is evident therefore, that the law of works, in fo far as it made a part of that folemn transaction at Mount Sinai, was only subservient to the gospel. or that typical administration of grace which was contained in the feveral ceremonies and ritual institutions belonging to the law of Mofes.

Upon the whole, if we view the different parts of the transaction at Mount Sinai, it may be affirmed, that it contained a promulgation of the law as a covenant of works, requiring perfect obedience to all its precepts, as the condition of life and happiness, and threatning death, or everlating misery, for the least transgression or failure in obedience; in respect of which the covenant of grace; promise, or law of faith, is constantly opposed to it in the New Testament. And it likewise included a typical, obscure, legal and service administration of the covenant of grace; in respect of which the more clear, full, spiritual and glorious administration of this covenant, under the New Testament, is also opposed to it in the apostolic

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Hence it appears, that the old and new cousnant are compared, or contrasted with each other. in the New Testament, on very different accounts. Sometimes a comparison is stated between them. on purpose to shew the difference between the covenant of grace and the covenant of works, or the way of falvation by grace and the way of falvation by works. Thus when the apostle opposes the promise, the law of faith, or covenant of grace, to the law, or old covenant; it is plain, that this is to be understood no otherwise than as a covenant of works. So that the law of works which he speaks of, is the very same with the covenant of works made with Adam before the fall, which, for fome fpecial and weighty reasons, was repeated, and published with awful folemnity on Mount Sinai.

The two covenants are, by the same apostle, elfewhere t, compared for a very different reason; namely, to flew how far the dispensation of grace under the New Testament excels that legal and imperfelt administration of the covenant of grace which the church was under before the coming of the Melhab. And when the old covenant is thus con--trafted with the new, by it we are to understand that whole typical dispensation which Israel and the Fewifb church were under during the Molaic economy; and by the new covenant, not the covenant of grace, but that more excellent and glorious administration thereof which has taken place fince the coming of Christ, and the erection of the golpel-church.

And here it may be observed, that, without attending carefully to those different views that are

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THE RESERVE OF THE PARTY OF THE Rom. iii. Gal. iii. 4.24. † Heb. viii. ix. x. See also 2 Cor. iii.

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given of the two covenants in the apostolic writings, it is impossible to understand the scope and tendency, or perceive the force and propriety of the apostle's reasoning in those passages, where he states a comparison between the law and the golpel, the old and new covenant, and fets the one in opposition to the other. Let the impartial reader then judge, whether the author of the letters had any reason to affert, with so much considence as he does, that the commonly received distinction betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace ferves to fet afide, obscure and confound the capital diffinction fet before us in the apostolic writings, betwixt the old and new covenant. He might with equal reason have affirmed, that the distinction between the law of works and the gospel, or the covenant of grace upon which the apostle Paul builds much of his reasoning in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, served to set aside, obscure and confound the distinction which the fame apostle sets before us, in the 8th and oth chapters of his epiffle to the Hebrews, betwint the first and second covenant, and thus taxed the inspired apostle with inconsistency and self-contradiction. For it must be evident to every one who attentively confiders the scope of the apostle's reasoning in those places where he opposes the promise, or covenant of grace, to the law, that the diffinetion which he makes betwixt them tallies exactly, or rather is the very same with that distinction betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, which this Gentleman would make us believe owes its rife only to the fond conceit of some syltematic divines, and has a manifest tendency to confound the scriptural distinction betwixt the old and new covenant.

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This author also attempts to fix a charge of contradicting the apostle Paul upon those who teach, that these covenants are sometimes compared and opposed to each other in the New Testament, not as two covenants differing in substance from each other, but as two dispensations of one and the fame covenant : yet nothing can be more plain, than that the apostle, in the 8th and 9th chapters of the epiftle to the Hebreus, does not speak of them as two covenants for life and falvation specifically diffined from each other. but only as containing two different administrabe granted, unless we shall suppose that the Levitical priesthood, facrifices, and ceremonies belonging to the Old Testament occonomy, had no relation at all to Jesus Christ, or the covenant of grace, or no way belonged to the administration of that covenant. But there is no soom for any supposition of this kind, while the apostle plainly intimates, that the great defign of all these was to typify and prefigure Christ, his priesthood and facrifice; with those spiritual bleffings and privileges which were thereby purchased and secured to all his people; and therefore he calls them patterns and figures of heavenly or spiritual things, and tells us, that the law bad a foodow of good things to come +. Hence it is abundantly evident, that Christ, his righteousness and grace, were exhibited, though darkly, to the faith of believers under the Old Testament dispensation.

As Palamon, with a degree of confidence peculiar to himself, has thought proper to reject what

Letters on Theron, &c. p. 355. + Heb. ix. 23, 24.

is contained in the confessions of all the Reformed churches, and has hitherto been taught by all found Protestant divines, concerning the covenant of works, and the two different administrations of the covenant of grace, it might have been expected, that he would at least have clearly delivered his own opinion concerning them; but all we have from him is comprised in a few dark hints, which it is difficult to make any thing of. Hence it would appear, that his delign was rather to overthrow, than to build; for he cavils at almost every thing, without establishing any thing, or even fo much as attempting to do fo, by any fair method of reasoning. He indeed, somewhere, is pleased to tell us, " that he would not chuse so " rank with those who unsettle two points where " they fix one " :" but we do not find that he has been fo good as his word; for we cannot help thinking, that he has endeavoured to unfettle mamy points of great importance where he has fixed mone and the contract that the many well

Had this writer acted as ingenuous and fair, a part as most of those systematic divines whom he treats with so much contempt, have done, we might much more easily have formed a judgment concerning his scheme of principles, and known what is his real opinion with regard to the several points in controversy between him and his antatagonists. They ordinarily deliver their sentiments in such a plain and regular method, as gives the reader an easy view of what they maintain; of the connection of the several purposes they treat of, and the dependance which one part of their scheme has upon another; but it is evident, that such a method would not at all have suited the

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Letters on Theron, &cc. p. 214.

delign of this author, which, so far as I can perceive, is rather to defame, and pour contempt upon the memory of his opponents, than with a becoming zeal to affert and vindicate the truths of the gospel, in opposition to the several errors and false opinions by which proud self-seeking men have endeavoured to obscure and pervert them.

One thing, relating to the diffinction betwixt the old and new covenant, is confidently afferted by our author, which deserves particular notice, as being evidently false in itself, and having a native tendency to give a false view of, and beget very erroneous notions concerning fome important truths taught, and inculcated, in feveral passages of the apostolic writings. He affirms, that the diffinction betwixt the old and new covenant is the fame with the diftinction betwixt fleft and foirit, fo often mentioned in the New Tettamentt. Hence an unwary reader may be apt to conclude, that wherever the words flesh and spirit occur in the New Testament, they fignify the old and new covenant; and that wherever the infpired writers diffinguish, or put a difference, betwixt flefb and foirit, and oppose the one to the other, they intend only to let before us the diffinction betwixt the old and new covenant; or that typical difpensation the Old Testament church was under, and the more spiritual dispensation of grace which the church has been under fince the coming of the Melliab, and the erection of the gospel-kingdom. But this is fuch an extravagant imagination, and so contrary to the plain scope of the several pasfages in the New Testament, in which the flesh and spirit are distinguished from, and opposed to, each other; that I can hardly perfuade myfelf. that the author of the letters himself would admit of it. However, by expressing himself so incautiously on this head, he has given occasion to those who may be disposed to improve it, for putting the most perverse and corrupt glosses upon the several passages in the New Testament, where a

distinction is made betwixt flest and spirit.

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I know not the least shadow of reason Palamen could have for expressing bimself in this manner, if it is not, that the infpired penman of the epiftle to the Hebrews, calls the rules and ceremonies belonging to the law of Moses, carnal ordinances, and the fanctuary, in which the most folemn acts of worthip were performed under the law, a worldly fanctuary*: and indeed, confidered in themselves, they were fuch; as they had no intrinsu excellency, nor were useful, any further then they served to typify and prefigure spiritual or heavenly things: for they were only shadows of good things to come, and not the very images of the things themselves; or, as the apostle, elsewhere, in the same epistle, emphatically deligns them, PATTERNS of things in the beaverst. But, in respect of their spiritual and myflical fignification, they were divine ordinances. in which Christ, his righteousnels, offices, grace, and falvation, were exhibited to the faith of believers under the Old Testament dispensation; and in the due observation of which God was pleased to admit his people to gracious communion and fellowship with himself: and it is plain, that in so far as they belonged to the old covenant, they were intended to typify and represent good things to come---

^{*} Heb. ix. 10.-1.

[†] υποδίνματα τῶν ἐν τοῖς δυρακοῖς; exhibiting not a perfect image, but only fome faint refemblance of those things they were intended to represent or typify. Heb. ix. 23.

which are more clearly revealed and exhibited to the view of the church, now under the Christian dispensation. Thus though considered abstractly, or without any regard to their mystical signification, they might be termed carnal, or stelly ordinances; yet, in so far as Christ, and the blessings of the covenant of grace, were shadowed forth and presigned by them, doubtless they belonged to the administration of the covenant of grace, and, in this respect, cannot be called sless. And it is observable, that, though they are sometimes designed carnal ordinances in the New Testament, we do not find that they are any where called sless in the abstract; much less is the old covenant itself so called.

As the author of the letters will not allow, that the old covenant made with Ifrael, either contained a repetition of the law, or covenant of works made with Adam in the state of innocency, or any way belonged to the administration of the covenant of grace; we are at a loss to know what it was, or in what light it is to be viewed according to his scheme. Perhaps, with Socinians and some Anabaptiffs, he thinks it no way respected eternal life and falvation, nor contained any promifes of spiritual bleffings; but that God therein promised only temporal bleffings, or the good things of a prefent life, to the obedient. But, if we may believe the Scriptures, this opinion cannot be admitted: for the Lord promifed to Ifrael, that if they would obey his voice, and and keep his commandments. they should be a peculiar treasure unto him above all people; and that they should be unto him a kingdam of priests, an boly nation. Further, upon their obedience, he promised, that he would divell

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Exed. xix. 5, 6.

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among them, and be THEIR GOD*. Yea, life is expressly promised in the old covenant; such a life as includes everlasting happiness, if we may credit our Lord and his apostles; who, when speaking of the life promised in the old covenant to the obedient, sufficiently intimate, that they understood by it not only temporal bleffings, or a happy life in the possession of the earthly Canaan, but also, yea chiefly, eternal life in heaven +.

And here it may be observed, that the life that was promised in the law, only upon the condition of perfect obedience, was given, or offered ablolutely, without any condition, to finners under that dispensation, in the promise first made to Abraham, including his feed, and afterwards to the rest of the patriarchs. Which promise was from time to time renewed, amplified, and more clearly unfolded to the whole nation of Ifreel by the ministry of the prophets. This pramife, with the types, facrifices and ceremonies belonging to the Mosaic reconomy, whereby Christ and spiritual bleffings were then exhibited to the faith of the church, was the gospel that was preached to finners under that dispensation; wherein the gift of righteousness and salvation through the promiled Melliab, was as really brought near to all within the pale of the visible church during the Patriarchal and Mofaic, as they are to us now under the Christian occonomy. Though still it must be acknowledged, that this latter dispensation of grace is far more clear, glorious and extensive, than the former.

[·] Exod. xxix. 45. Levit. xxvi. 3-11, 12. f Levit. xviii. 5. compared with Matt. xix. 17. 23. Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 12. 10 2011 No hantima la

In short, if a special relation to God, and interest in him, with all the bleffings and privileges included in, or which necessarily flow from the fame, as also everlafting life and happiness, were promifed in the old covenant; it may fafely be affirmed, that the very fame bleffings for fubitance, that are freely bequeathed in the new, were promifed in the old covenant; conditionally in the law, and absolutely, or gratuitously, in that typical covenant that was made with Abraham, and frequently renewed and confirmed to his feed. And therefore the Socinian notion above-mentioned, namely, that the first covenant contained only a promise of the land of Ganaan, and other temporal bleffings, must be acknowledged to be a very wild and extravagant supposition; a supposition entirely repugnant to the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament.

That there were promises of temporal bleffings in the old covenant peculiarly fuited to that flate of minority, and confequently fervile flate, which the church was then in ; yea further, that those were chiefly, and the promiles of spiritual bleffings and falvation more sparingly infifted on under the legal dispensation, is readily granted; but that temporal bleffings only were promised in the first covenant; promifed only or chiefly for themselves, and not rather as types and fladows of good things to come; of spiritual bleffings and eternal salvation, which were thereby exhibited and represented, though darkly, to the faith of believers under that dispensation; is an imagination that has not the least foundation to support it, in the facred writings, but is directly contrary thereto.

To admit this supposition, argue from it, and recommend a scheme of Christianity formed upon

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the fame, would indeed be in a remarkable manner to take away the key of knowledge, and miflead many in the understanding of the Scriptures; as Palamon, with as little reason as modesty, affirms * those have done who maintain, that the old and new covenants are not to be accounted two covenants for life and falvation differing in fubstance from each other, but only two dispenfations of one and the same covenant of grace. If we may believe him, all who teach, that believers under the Old Testament were not saved by one covenant of grace, and believers under the New by another; or that the former were not under a covenant of works, by fulfilling the condition of which they were to feek righteoufness, life, and everlasting happiness, but under a dispensation of the covenant of grace, as well as the latter; and that the old and new covenant are not two covenants for life and falvation specifically, or substantially different from each other, but two different administrations of one and the same covenant of grace; do contradict the apostle Paul, who expressly calls them two covenants, and in many respects opposes the one to the other,

But this Gentleman might know, that those whose sentiments on this head he thinks sit to impugn, never scruple to call the old and new covenant two covenants, in the same sense, or oppose them to each other in the same manner the apostle does; though they never could find any reason to think that the apostle, by distinguishing and opposing them to each other, intended to shew, that the faints before the coming of Christ were under a covenant of works, so that they could not receive any spiritual blessings, or obtain everlasting

^{*} Letters, &c. p. 955: 2 .535001 *

happiness, but on account of their own personal obedience to the law; or that there are two coyenants of grace specifically distinct from each other; by one of which believers under the Old Testament were faved, and believers under the New by the other. And can they be justly blamed for this? Is it not abundantly evident from the whole of the apolite's reasoning with regard to the two covenants, that his defign was to hew, that no finner, either under the Old or New Testament, could be faved any other way, than by the covenant of grace, or by faith in Christ; and that the administration of the covenant of grace under the gospel, does far excel the administration of the same covenant, under the law or Mosaic occopy on If it is so, which I think ican hardly be refused, the teachers above mentioned are to far from contradicting the apostle Paul, when they affirm, that the old and new covenant are only two different dispensations of the fame covenant, that they do really declare the true fense and meaning of those passages in which he states the compension betwint the two covenants, and opposes the one to the other

The author of the letters infinuates, that strange use has been made of the systematical distinction herwise the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, which he tells us may be seen in a book, much esteemed by many popular preachers, called The Marrow of Madirn Divinity to But I am apt to think, an intelligent render, who will take the trouble carefully to persule that celebrated treatife, will find, that the author of it has made no other use of the distinction afore-mentioned, which he shows to be suf-

[•] Letters, p. 3550 . 1 .20 . 213110.

ficiently warranted by the Scriptures, than, by the help of it, to illustrate and vindicate some important truths of the gospel, which have often been confounded, corrupted, and perverted by those who either have not duly adverted to, or not fightly understood that necessary distinction betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, the law and the promife, or the way of falvation by works and the way of falvation by grace. And the impartial and judicious will eafily perceive, that what that author teaches concerning the covenant of works and the covenant of grace exactly agrees with, and is evidently founded upon those passages of Scripture, in which the law and the promise, the law of works and the law of faith, or covenant of grace, are carefully diftinguished from, and oppoled to each other.

Palamon, who denies, and invelghs with fo much warmth against the scriptural distinction betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, and the use that has been made of it, might with as much reason centure the spottle Paul for making a diffinction betwixt the law of works and the law of faith, or betwixt works and grace; and rell us, he has made a ftrange use of that diffinetion. For, as we shewed already, that is the very fame with the former, which this extraordinary author would have exploded as a systematic dream; thus agreeing with those whom, with a scornful fmile, he is pleased to call philosophic Christians, or Christian deifts; who ordinarily, in their writings, represent the peculiar doctrines of Christianity as fo many fystematic or scholastic notions, that ought to be discarded by men of reason. I am not a little furprised to find the letter-writer, on some occasions, professing such a hearty contempt for thole Gentlemen, and censuring them in such a haughty

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haughty and fcornful manner, when, for any thing I can fee, his own fentiments concerning matters of the greatest importance, are nearly the same with theirs. But it is evident, that pride and a felfpleafing affectation of fingularity, have far greater influence with some, than reason or an impartial

regard to truth land juffice. In the standing and

When the author of the letters tells us, that the Scripture feems to make facrificing, or the fledding of blood, necessary in the covenants God makes with men; and thus infinuates, that the Scripture gives us no ground to suppose, that there was a covenant of works made with man in the flate of innocency; his observation is idle and impertinent. Does not he know that the covenant of works, as described by the teachers whom he thinks fit to oppose in this matter, was such as neither required, nor admitted any facrifice or fhedding of blood, there having been no variance, but the most perfect amity between God and man when that covenant was made betwixt them? Now, where there is no variance, there is no need of reconciliation; where there is no transgression; there can be no need of any atonement. As all the legal facrifices did undoubtedly typify the blood of Christ, the great atoning facrifice that was to be offered once in the end of the world for the expiation of fin; it is equally certain, that they belonged to the administration of the covenant of grace; and that the promises made to Adam, Abraham and the rest of the Patriarchs, concerning the Meffiah, were confirmed and ratified thereby. And, as these promises, without all question, belonged to the covenant of grace, may we not affirm, that by the blood of bulls, goats, and other animals, facrificed under the law, there was a sypical ratification of that covenant? a food on mint shiftle of this morney

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Thus it appears that the letter-writer had no reafon to infinuate, that the old and new covenant must be two covenants differing in substance from each other; because the former was ratified by the blood of bulls and goats, and the latter by the blood of Christ: for if we consider the great end and defign of all the facrifices under the Old Testament economy, it will evidently appear, that one and the same covenant, was ratified by both; typically by the blood of bulls and goats, and other flain beafts; and really by the blood of Christ, which the former was intended to prefigure and represent to the faith of the church under the Mosaic dispenfation; as is manifest from the scope and strain of the apostle's reasoning, in the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of the epiftle to the Hebrews, w

Though the author of the letters plainly gives it as his opinion, that there was no covenant of works made with the first Adam; and confequently that Adam was not a foederal head to his posterity; he allows, that in the New Testament the obedience of Christ with its effects is contrasted with the sin of Adam and its effects: but how that can be, without supposing such a foederal relation between the first Adam and his feed, as there is between the fecond Adam and his spiritual seed, is not easy to conceive. As the denying that there was any foederal transaction between God and Adam before the fall, must affect every other fentiment concerning religion, it is attended with a numerous train of abfurd and dangerous confequences; fuch as thefe. that the fin of Adam cannot in any proper fense be imputed to his posterity; that they are punished with the loss of God's image, and the want of original righteousness, without being chargeable with any guilt that does merit fuch a punishment; or that there is no original fin inherent; and that men are not by nature, but only by practice, children of wrath, and beirs of bell; with many others of a like nature, which have a manifest tendency to undermine and overthrow the whole system of revealed truth.

Such an error in the very foundation of our author's scheme, which must have no small influence apon the whole, gives us no favourable idea of his religious principles; especially when we consider, that most of those perverte and heretical notions, by which men of corrupt minds have endeavoured to pervert the gospel of Christ, have been built upon

the fame rotten foundation.

But though Palemon feems strongly inclined to reject the Scripfure-account of the covenant of works, he can, when he pleases, furnish us with one of his own making. This, if I rightly understand his meaning, he does in a note, at the bottom of p. 10. of his letters; where he is pleafed to tell us, " he is far from thinking, that any honest or fin-" cere attempt to please God ever failed of success. " Sec." If he only means, that no such thing ever was, or can be found with any unrenewed finner; who, being wholly under the power of corruption, and the natural enmity of the heart against God, can never do any thing well-pleafing to him, not fo much as think one good thought, nor have the leaft good defire or inclination to please God; it is readily granted: for the Apostle tells us, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be ": which exactly agrees with what our Lord teaches, when he tells us, that what sever is born of the field is flesh t. From both these passages, and many others both in the Old and New Tellament, it is evident, that every

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product of corrupt nature is corrupt, wholly corrupt; and confequently, that every imagination, thought, purpole, affection and inclination of the natural man, is evil, and only evil continually; and therefore all his actions, attempts or endeavours, must be so too.

But if the letter-writer, in the note above-mentioned, intended to infinuate, that a promife of the favour of God and everlasting happines, is made to every honest, or fincere attempt to please God; so that every one with whom this is really to be found, may claim these as due to him, according to the tenor of the law of works, he ought to have proved this before he had afferted it with fo much confidence. Whatever he may think, we are fure there is not one passage of Scripture that favours, or that can, without straining, be so interpreted as to support such a notion, though we can eafily find many that do effectually overthrow it. He adds, " he is ready to shew, that all obis jections and impediments have been, by a pare ticular edict for that purpole, removed and difgenfed with in favour of all who are fincerely " well-disposed, whenever they shall be found."

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We wish Palemon had explained himself more fully here; for it is not easy to conceive what he intends by this observation, unless he means, that God has condescended so far to lower the demands of his law, as to declare, that he is willing to accept of an imperfect righteousness, or a righteousness stained with sin in place of that perfect obedience which was originally required by the law of works, as the condition of life or everlasting happiness; or that he has by promise, or a particular edict for that purpose, bound himself to reward every honest and sincere attempt to please him, in the same manner he engaged himself, by his promise,

mile, to reward perfect obedience, in the law or covenant of works made with innocent Adam. If this is really his opinion, he must also allow, that good works, however imperfect, yea the least endeavour, or fincere desire to please God, do merit everlasting life and happiness in the same manner that perfect obedience would have done according to the original tenor of the law of works. Thus, inflead of one, which yet he will fcarce allow of he makes two covenants of works; one, which promiles eternal happinels upon the condition of perfeel obedience, or entire conformity to the divine law in thought, word, and deed; and another, which. far from being to rigorous, promifes eternal life and falvation on the condition of fincere though imperfect obedience; and even to reward the leaft. honest attempt, or fincere endeavour to please God. with everlasting happiness; so that with whomsoever this is found they may claim eternal life as a reward of debt.

Whatever may be faid of unconverted finners, it is certain, that believers according to this new doctrine may warrantably claim everlasting life, as a reward due to them for their good works and fincere endeavours: for, that true believers not only defire and endeavour to please God, but are enabled actually to perform good works, is what I suppose Polamon himself will allow. How far this is consistent with the apostle's reasoning, Rom at 6, we leave to be considered by the letter writer, who perhaps may in his next oblige us with an attempt to prove what in this he only declares he is ready to show.

Further; if we admit Palemer's opinion conberning this fecond edition of the covenant of works — we must at the same time allow, that the old covenant of works, which required a perfect righteousness as the condition of eternal happiness, is now wholly superfeded and abrogated, at least as to all who enjoy the benefit of divine sevelation. If this is really the case, the apostle Paul must have been greatly mistaken when he affirmed, that they are curfed subo continue not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them *: for Palæmon is ready to shew, that the demands of the law of works, whatever they might have been originally, do not now run so high by a great deal; but that every the least fincere and well-meant attempt to please God, is sufficient to free one from the curse or condemning sentence of the law, and to found a just claim to everlasting happiness.

Many found divines, at least who were generally accounted fuch, among Protestants, before Palamon was pleased to thunder out his direful anathemas against them, as corrupters and perverters of the ancient gospel, have, from the passage above-mentioned, and others of a like import, endeavoured to prove against the Papifts, that good works done after convertion can no more merit everlasting life. or be with fafety opposed to the charge brought against the finner by the divine law, than those which men pretend to do before conversion; and hence they have concluded, that the greatest faint has no more title to the favour of God, or eternal happinels, on account of his own obedience, than the greatest sinner; but must acknowledge himfelf to be wholly indebted to the free and fovereign grace of God for pardon, justification, falvation, and all happiness promised to him here, or enjoyed by him hereafter. And if the apostle's affirmation is true, it must be allowed that their reasoning is to the foliage of pention, which is the common

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just. But whatever he may assert, or they conclude, concerning this point, the letter-writer is ready to shew, in opposition both to him and them, that all good works, however imperfect, yea every sincere desire and endeavour to please God, with whomsoever they are sound, do both free from the curse of the divine law, and purchase a title to

everlafting life.

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However much Palamon thinks fit to inveigh against the anti-christian spirit of the Romanists on other occasions, as to this point, there is no great difference between him and them; for the more moderate among them will grant, that no good works done before, but only these that are done after conversion, are meritorious. They will also allow, that the latter do not merit properly, but only by paction, or because God has by his promife bound himfelf to reward them with eternal life; which I apprehend is the native and necessary confequence of our author's docume. Thus, whatever may be ascribed to the grace of God in the justification of a sinner, it can have little or no place in the fatuation of a believer, or of one who has been enabled to perform any acceptable acts of obedience to the law of God. And whatever the letter-writer may think of the grace, godliness and good works of the popular preachers, and of those whom he is pleased to call the votaries of the popular doctrine; which he will not allow to be any thing elfe but hypoerify and Pharifailm, or the fume and froth of human pride; we suppose he will not deny, that a believer of the ancient gospel, fuch as himself and his brethren, may and does perform good works, works of charity, and felf-denied obedience; any one of these therefore, yea, what is much less, any honest or fincere attempt to perform them, must afford him a just claim to everlasting life

and happiness.

Palæmon is much displeased with his antagonists for ascribing so much to their acts of faith; but, from what has been observed, it is easy to see, that he must attribute a great deal more to his own acts. of faith; for so he is pleased to call good works done by believers after conversion*. After all the noise he makes, he is not able to accuse those with whom he has the warmest controversy on this head, of any thing belides their holding faith, and the feveral acts thereof, to be instrumental in accepting, receiving, or taking possession of the blessings which are exhibited and freely offered in the word of grace and promise: and it is not easy to conceive how those who own, that there is any such thing as justifying and faving faith, can attribute less to it. But it is evident, that he must ascribe much more to his acts of faith; while, according to his doctrine, every one of them must be meritorious, or afford a just title to eternal falvation. However much need then ungodly finners may have of the divine righteoufness, when they are thoroughly pinched with the impossibility of hope on every other side, it is plain, that Palamon's believers can have little or no occasion for it; every one of their acts of faith being enough to intitle them to everlafting happiness, according to the tenor of the law of works, as really as Adam's obedience would have done him, had he perfifted in it to the end. Being thus righteous before God by their own obedience, and in their own persons, one would think they may well enough fland upon their own bottom, without being any further indebted to that righteousness which delivereth from death. And

[·] Letters on Theron, &c. p. 406.

78 PALÆMON'S CREED Art. IV.

in this case the reward can be no more of grace, but must be of works; otherwise, as the apostle speaks, work is no more work*.

But it is now time to pass on to the consideration of another article of Palæmon's new creed, which

is as follows.

ARTICLE IV.

Natural reason, aided by the external revelation of the gospel, or the dictates of a natural conscience, compared with the revealed reason of hope, are sufficient to bring men to the true knowledge of God, and consequently to everlasting happiness, without any special or internal operation of the divine Spirit upon their minds and hearts.

REMARKS

differentian on spirit, particularly from p. 270, to p. 178. has a great deal of abstrace and mustical reasoning, which I doubt if any but himself can thoroughly understand; yet we find some scattered hints, here and there, from which, when compared with other passages in his book, we may venture to guess at his opinion concerning some points of no small importance in the Christian scheme. As he does not fail to ridicule and scoff at what has been ordinarily taught by those whom he is pleased to brand with the invidious epithet of popular preachers, concerning the necessity of a convincing work of the Spirit of God, in order to

a believing on the Son of God, almost wherever he has occasion to mention the same; he seems also plainly enough to infinuate, that a due attention to what he sometimes calls man's natural notions, in opposition to his invented ones, and sometimes the simple and invariable, universal and indelible dictates of conscience, is all that is needful for bringing men to fuch a conviction of fin and fense of guilt, as are sufficient to make them prize, and fet a just value upon the revelation of Christ, and falvation through him, in the gospel, which he calls the revealed reason of hope. And the account he gives us of the nature of justifying faith leaves as little room for any agency of the divine Spirit in producing it ; for, according to him, it is only an affent to the hiltory of the gospel, concerning the death and refurrection of Christ; fo that whoever believes, that Jesus died and rose again, is possessed of true faith, or of that faith that iuftifies.

The knowledge of these supernatural facts is what the letter-writer frequently calls the knowledge of the bare truth, or of Christ's bare work; which he affirms to be the fole requifite, or what only is necessary to the justification of a finner. And as he calls the divine righteoulnels the fole requifte to justification, not in opposition to the works of the law, or whatever may come under that notion, but to the exclusion of every exercise of the foul, or motion of the human mind respecting the fame; call it heart-work, grace, faith, knowledge, or what elfe you pleafe; one would think the fcope of a great deal of his reasoning - is to shew, that the righteourness of Christ must justify the guilty whether it be known, apprehended, received and believed in, or not. The truth is, without fuppolmg

poling this, a great part of his book must be confidered, as confifting of a mere jumble of incoherent notions and words without any meaning. Yet as he could not but be fensible, that such a suppofition is too absurd and extravagant to be admitted, he has found it necessary to allow, that some kind of faith on the part of the finner, is requifite in order to justification and falvation; and this he afferts to be the bare knowledge of Christ's work finished upon the cross, or the simple belief of his death and refurrection.

Now it is plain, that a careful attention to the evidence of those facts recorded in the New Teftament, is sufficient to determine the assent, and. produce in the human mind a persuasion of the truth of what is thus revealed and testified. If then the bare knowledge, or persuasion of the truth of these facts, is all that is meant by justifying faith, every one who; upon a strict examination of the evidence by which they are supported, believes and admits them as true, or gives a rational affent to what is recorded concerning them in the history of the gospel, is possessed of faving faith, and confequently juffified.

But as it will readily be allowed, that the hiftory of the New Testament, concerning the death and refurrection of Jefus, does bear fuch marks of credibility, as are sufficient to determine the affent of every rational inquirer, or fatisfy him that it is true ; to attain such a faith nothing is necessary but such an improvement of those reasoning powers men are naturally endued with, as every natural man is capable of. Therefore, after all the noise the letter-writer makes about his faith, it amounts to no more than a rational affent to the truth of the gospel, or history of the New Teftament:

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tament; such an assent as every man may, and must give to it, who only attends to the evidence of the facts therein recorded.

But Palemon will tell us, his faith includes the knowledge of the fact of Christ's resurrection and its import, or the character of God thence arising. Be it so; yet it is evident, that his believer obtains the knowledge of both in the very same manner, namely, by the exercise of his own natural reason, without any supernatural work of the divine Spirit upon his mind and heart. When once he knows the former, to acquire the knowledge of the latter nothing farther is necessary, than to deduce so many rational inferences from it, which none can resuse to admit, without giving manifest proofs of gross inattention and stupidity.

This the letter-writer himself acknowledges; for thus he writes: " He who admits this fact as " circumftanced in the gospel-history, will find as " regular and uniform a connection in all the " parts of the Christian religion, or in all thethings that concern the kingdom of heaven, as is to " be found in the course of nature : yea, and more " fo; feeing the course of nature has been often "thwarted by the manifest interpolition of its 46 author, not to mention the interruptions of its ordinary course by uncommon events; whereas that kingdom cannot be moved." A little after he adds the following words. "All who pretend to admit the refurrection of Jesus, and yet es go about to undermine any of the doctrines de-" livered by the inspired witnesses thereof, give " manifest proofs of gross inattention or disinge-" nuity, or rather both"."

[.] Letters, &c. p. 169.

That there is a regular and uniform connection in all the parts of the Christian religion, it being the most consummate effect of infinite wisdom, and therefore called by the apostle Paul, the mystery of the manifold wildem of God, is undoubtedly true : and how far one, by the mere exercise of his reasoning powers may be able to perceive, or demonstrate the necessary connection that all the peculiar doctrines of Christianity have with the death and refurrection of Christ, as explained and improved in the New Testament; so as that it may be difficult. and a proof of gross inattention to with-hold an affent to them, or refuse to admit them as true; I shall not determine: but I think, the Scripture warrants me to affirm, that fomething more is necessary to d increase such a knowledge of them as beget ar is necessary to falvation, namely, the teaching and supernatural illumination of the Holy Ghoft. For the divinely-inspired apostle tells us, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, but, that they are foolishness to bim, - because they are Giritually discerned. And when speaking of himself and all true believers, he fays, We have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freele given to us of God t.

We might adduce a great many passages, both from the Old and New Testament; wherein the same truth is clearly taught and inculeated; but from what we have already quoted, I think it is plain, that the spossic and Palamen impute the great opposition that has been ordinarily made to the document of the gospel, by men both wife and ingenious in other respects, to very different causes.

^{*} i Cor. ii. 14. † 1 Cor. ii. 12.

Palemon imputes it to gross inattention or disingenuity; or, which is the very fame thing, to a neglect of the due improvement of their rational faculties; but, if we may believe the apostle, the true cause of it is the natural blindness of the human mind, and enmity of the heart against God and his truths, especially the revelation he has made of his grace in the gospel; which lies directly cross to all those notions of God and divine things that men are naturally apt to form in their own minds, and to the natural bias of the heart; which cannot be removed but by a supernatural work of the divine Spirit, enlightening the mind and conquering the heart, and bringing it into captivity to the obedience of Chriss.

When we compare what is advanced by the letterwriter in the passages above-quoted, and others of a like nature, with the account which he makes Jonathan, a sictitious Christian of his own making, give of his conversion; we cannot help thinking, that his believers are more like moral philosophers inquiring into the evidence of facts, and draw-

Here I hope none will mistake me, as if, by speaking thus, I had the least intention to insinuate, that a rational inquiry into the grounds of the Christian religion, and a careful examination of the evidence of the facts relating to the death and resurrection of Christ recorded in the New Testament, are either unnecessary, or unbecoming a Christian. These doubtless are of great use in their own place, particularly, for enabling one to stop the mouths of gainsayers, and defend Christianity against the attacks of its open adversaries; but certainly more is necessary to produce justifying or saving faith; which is declared to be the gift of God, and a fruit of the gracious operation of his Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men. Ephes. ii, 8. Philip. i. 29. 2 Thes. i. 11. Psal. cx. 3.

ing such inferences from them, as every man endued with reason must admit or give manifest proofs of gross inattention and stupidity, than humble Christians acknowledging with the apostle Paul*, that any knowledge they have of divine . things, is what they could never attain to by their own penetration and studious endeavours; but wholly owing to the special illumination, and supernatural teaching of the Holy Spirit. Palemon's convert does indeed speak of the knowledge of the facts above-mentioned, as " forcing upon "him a new fet of principles, by the most con-" vincing as well as irreliftible evidence;" and he tells us he frankly acknowledges, " that his religion, " or his hope toward God, is not founded on " argument, nor on the wildom of men, but on " the power of God +:" but all his affertions, and concessions of this kind, I think, amount to no more than this; that had be not been favoured with divine revelation, nor heard of the refureetion of Jesus, he could never have had any knowledge of the true religion, or way of falvation; but finding the refurrection fufficiently atteffed, and its import, or the true character of God thence arifing, fully afcertained in the New Testament his own reason, without any other affistance, forced or prevailed with him to admit both; and thus he commenced a true believer and justified person; Hence it is evident, that his faith is neither more nor less than an all of reason, which divine revelation, or the gospel-history, has furnished with proper materials to work upon.

And why may not every one who hears the gofpel, or only reads the New Testament, easily be-

^{* 1} Cor. ii. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 6. † Letters on Theron, Sec. p. 70.

come possessed of the same saith? yet this saith, if we may credit the letter-writer, is the only spring of true holines, love, and obedience to God, and influences thereto in the very same manner in which itself is produced; namely, by surnishing the mind with such a set of new notions, as are sufficient, without any other affishance, to prompt and engage to such a course of obedience to the divine commands, as comprehends the subole of what we are to understand by true holines.

Thus, after all his clamour, our author's religion turns out to be nothing more than a merely philosophical or rational religion; the knowledge and practice of which may be attained to by the exercise of natural reason, provided ftill we have divine revelation and the gospel, as fit materials to work upon. It is manifest therefore, that his scheme of religious principles differs very little from that which has been adopted, and recommended by those whom he calls fashionable divines, and fometimes philosophical Christians: natural or unrenewed reason being evidently the measure and standard of both; though in this they have the advantage, that theirs comes much nearer, and is more agreeable to the common standard than his ; which in many respects is consistent neither with reason nor itself. But if we may take his word for it he has every way the advantage of them in another respect; for while all their reasonings, and religious fentiments, with their devotion and obedience founded upon the fame, were only made Subservient to the gratification of their pride and vanity; that principle that is " firmly fettled in the

Letters, &c. p. 176, 177-374-412, 413, &c. heart

heart of every fool and of every philosopher ";" his own scheme of principles, though formed on the same plan with theirs, when thoroughly understood and embraced, influences to such an extraordinary degree of humility, felf-denial, obedience, and mortification to the world, and every thing highly effected among men, as neither they not any denomination of Christians, belides our author and his friends, can justly pretend to.

They, dull mortals! were never able to improve their reasoning powers so as to understand the gospel in the sense of the spostles, or hit upon the true way of falvation; or, in thort, fo as to become true Christians or better men : but he and his companions have been to happy as to fall upon the falutary expedient of improving the dietates of a natural confeience, and the powers of reason; so as to acquire the knowledge of the ancient gospel, and perceive the faving truth in all its native light and evidence; make it the fole foundation of their faith and hope, and extract from it every Christian grace, with every amiable and felf-denying virtue; and all without any fupernatural affiftance, or operation of the divine Spirit upon their minds and hearts. For, according to Palemon, what is affirmed concerning the necessity, nature and effects of this, is the very feul of the popular doctrine, in opposition to which his scheme is formed. In one word, however much they and their fellows mighs plume themselves on being superior in the are of reasoning, he and his are the better men.

Whether this is really fo or not we thall not now enquire ; only I thall here take the liberty to

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quote a passage from our author's letters, in which he represents his opponents as agreeing with the rational and philosophical divines above-mentioned. in the most material parts of their scheme. His words are these: " In general it may be said, "that though these two sorts of men do not chuse " to walk long in company together, yet they " meet, as it were by inflinct, without any mate-" rial difference, on all the most important occa-" fions. Their different schemes resemble our old " and new made roads in some parts of the coun-" try; which though they frequently take different courses for a confiderable way, the one 4. Shorter and the other longer, do yet now and " then intersect each other, and are sure to coin-" cide at the end of every remarkable stage." The charge which Palamon, in these words, endeavours to fix on his antagonists, whom he calls the popular preachers, like most of the accusations which he brings against them, has in it nothing either just or true; but whether it is not really applicable to himself and those of his fraternity, from the account that has been already given of some of their leading fentiments in religion, I think, may very eafily be determined.

Take away the words, imputed righteoufnefs, grand atanement, divino fovereignty, grace, fole requifite, and the like; which, as far as they obtain a place in our author's fystem, either convey a very dangerous and erroneous meaning, or are only empty founds, or words that have no fignificancy; separate all the wild unscriptural notions, which he seems to have borrowed from Antinomians, concerning the divine sovereignty; together with some low singularities peculiar to him and his party, from his scheme; and it will appear every way as

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rational*, in his sense of the word, that is, as much adapted to the natural notions and corrupt reason of mankind, as any that ever was formed by those whom he styles rational or philosophical Christians.

Was it needful farther to shew the strict alliance between our author and his philosophic brethren, in matters of religion, I might mention fome leading fentiments, that may justly be affirmed to be the foundation of both their schemes, in which they feem perfectly agreed; but as we do not incline to multiply particulars, the following inflances may fuffice as a specimen. They agree then in accounting for the method in which they acquire the knowledge, faith and privileges of the gospel, almost in the very same manner; both affirming, that they do so by renouncing all popular prejudices and opinions concerning religion, duly attending to the evidence of the gospel-history, and the proofs of Christ's refurrection therein contained, and inquiring into the genuine import of the doctrines taught by our Lord and his apostles. On the native evidence of the truth, thus appearing to the mind stript of all disguises and false colourings, which they alledge, those who have been commonly reputed orthodox commentators and popular preachers have put upon it, both pretend to rest what they call their faith. Further, both affirm, that this belief of what they call the simple. truth, undifguiled, and uncorrupted by the artifices of those who, in different ages of the church, have taken upon them to be the leaders of the public religion, is true faith; all the faith that is necessary

Abating those palpable absurdities and inconfittencies which are almost every where to be met with in his letters.

to justification and falvation. On both sides they also agree in denying, and frequently scoffing at what is called the appropriation, application, and affurance of faith; or affurance of the remission of fins, and eternal falvation, founded upon the great atonement, or propitiation, let forth in the dispensation of grace for the benefit of sinners, or on the promise and testimony of God in the gospel, and affirm, that a person's own obedience to the divine law, or precepts of the gospel, is that alone which he can with fafety build any certain hope of acceptance with God, or everlasting happiness, upon: and this is in effect to affert, that the righteoulness of Christ and the gospel are of no avail, further than they afford a kind of general hope to the guilty, that they may be faved; and keep them from finking into utter dispair, till by their own works and felf-denied obedience, or, as the letter-writer expreffes it, in the way of painful defire and fear, they have acquired a righteousness of their own, intitling them to the benefit of Christ's righteousnels, and warranting them to appropriate it and the feveral bleffings of the gospel to themselves.

In like manner, they both agree in denying and ridiculing what is called the internal and effectual operation of the divine Spirit in the regeneration and fanclification of believers, and the whole of his work upon the hearts of men; the one party reproaching all pretentions to any experience of it, under the notion of enthusias; while the other equally inveighs against all that is affirmed concerning it, as tending only to administer food for spiritual pride. Palæmon, and several of the philosophical Gentlemen above-mentioned, likewise agree in afferting, that there are no mysteries in religion; or that nothing ought to be admitted in religion, but what is agreeable to reason, and determined by

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That is, an affent founded upon the evidence of divine treths appearing to natural and aurenewed rea-

[†] They maintain, that faith and fincere obedience are our justifying righteousness before God; but they do not carry the point so far as the letter-writer does, when he instructed, that God by his promise has bound himself to reward the least degree of fincere obedience; yea, every honest attempt to please him, with eternal happiness. Hence it is evident, that wherein he differs from them with regard to this matter, he does really fall thort of them in point of orthodoxy.

denied obedience, may justly claim eternal happiness as a reward of debt: and if, as our author elsewhere seems to take for granted, every man's pride is equal to his worth*, we have reason to think, every such person will be forward enough to make the claim; and boast of it.

Palemon's faith therefore, far different from the ancient apostolic gospel, though with a degree of confidence, or shall I say impudence, not easy to be paralleled, he calls it by that name, instead of excluding, does evidently lay a foundation for boast-ing; which we doubt not but every believer of it will be very ready to improve to that effect.

As the letter-writer has thus furnished us with a scheme of religious principles differing so very little from those which the Gentlemen whom he styles sashionable divines have taught and recommended in their sermons and writings, I cannot but wonder what could induce him to pass such scornful centures upon Archbishop Tillesson, Mr. Lock, and others of a like stamp, as he does almost wherever he has occasion to mention them; but it seems Palamon must be allowed to thunder out his anathemas against all who presume in the least to differ from him +, however he and they may agree in the chief articles of their doctrine.

Had the author of the letters employed his talents in pointing out, and refuting the feveral errors to be met with in the writings of the two celebrated authors above-mentioned, he had no doubt done good fervice to the public; but we cannot think it

^{*} Letters, &c. p 45.

⁺ Hence we may observe, that there may be a little Pope as well as a great one; and that the spirit of Antichrist may operate as strongly in the heart of a petty fellery, as in the breast of the great Pontiss at Rome.

very generous in him to treat them with so much scorn and contempt; when it is evident, that the capital mistakes on which their scheme of Christianity was formed, make part of his own; to which are added a great many notions far more wild and extravagant, and no less dangerous and pernicious, than any thing they have taught or published to

the world.

I shall only further observe on this head, that with all who are of his religion and adopt his fentiments, blind and corrupt reason must supply the place of that divine illumination, and supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit, which has hitherto, by all found divines and humble Christians, been reckoned abfolutely necessary, in order to make the word of the gospel effectual for the regeneration, conversion and fanctification of any finner. But it must certainly be a very improper and unwarrantable method of fetting forth the fufficiency and excellency of Christ's work finished upon the cross, to set it in opposition to the work of his Spirit upon the heart; or, on pretence of exalting and magnifying the former, to deprediate and vilify the latter. As this is to pour contempt upon the Holy Ghoft, and is too like a doing despite unto the spirit of grace; so it is to give the lie to our bleffed Lord himfelf, who has taught us, that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince the world of fin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that his prefence in the church, and his concurrence with the word read or preached, is necessary for that purpose.

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John xvi. 7, 8. chap. xiv. 16. 26.

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THE depravity of human nature chiefly consists in that strong propensity that is naturally in every man to flatter his pride, by inventing or adopting such notions concerning the method of acceptance with God, as tend to beget, and cherish in him a deceitful sense of his own dignity and importance; from which nevertheless, by duly attending to the evidence of divine truth revealed in the gospel, and comparing it with the natural and infallible dictates of conscience, he may disintangle himself, and acquire a set of notions or principles, which will become as it were a new instinct in him; such as in the gospel is called REGENERATION, or the NEW CREATURE, and is the only spring of all true boliness, love and obedience to God.

REMARKS.

The first part of this proposition, if rightly understood and properly explained, might safely be admitted as true: for it must be allowed, that there is no greater evidence of the corruption of human nature, and of the natural pride of the heart and its enmity against God, than that strong bias that is naturally in the mind of every man inclining and prompting him to do or endeavour something toward his acceptance with God, or, in other words, to seek righteousness and salvation by the works of the law; together with that strong opposition that is in the heart of every natural man, to the true doctrine of the gospel revealing the way of life and salvation by Jesus Christ, or that divine righteous-

righteousness through which alone a guilty sinner can be justified, and restored to the favour of God, and the enjoyment of all those bleffings and privileges that are confequential to or flow from the fame.

But an intelligent reader, who feriously considers what Palemon has advanced on this subject, will eafily perceive, that he has given a very lame and imperfect account of the original corruption of human nature. And indeed this feems to be the capital defect in his scheme, which is evidently founded on the same mistaken notions of that corrupt and finful state which all men are naturally in, that have been the fource of almost all the errors that ever were vented in the Christian church concerning the method of redemption, reconciliation and acceptance with God. These may justly be confidered as the foundation upon which men of corrupt minds have built all their different schemes of Christianity that have been formed in opposition to the truth of the gospel; and upon inquiry it will be found, that they also give rise to all those practical errors and mistakes which men are so apt to fall into concerning the way of falvation, or the means of obtaining true happiness.

To enumerate the various mistakes of this kind which men privileged with the gospel-revelation are liable to, or actually influenced by, in their pursuits after happiness, would be impossible. At present. I firall only take notice of two cardinal ones, which, I think, may be confidered as the forme of fome of the most popular and dangerous errors that obtain among professors of Christianity, especially those among whom the gospel is dispensed in greatest ou-

rity.

It is too evident, then, that there are not a few. who being convinced by the tellimony of the divine word and their own confelences, and perhaps more fully

fully by a common work of the Spirit of God upon their minds, and some experience of the strength and working of corruption in their own hearts. that perfect obedience to the divine law, is what neither they themselves nor any man fince the fall of Adam can perform; yea, that men in their own ftrength, or without the special and supernatural affiftance of the divine Spirit, can do nothing that is really well-pleafing to God, and that regeneration, conversion, faith and repentance, are absolutely neceffary to falvation ; do readily conclude, that thefe, under the covenant of grace, must supply the place of that perfect righteoulness which was required in the law of works, as the condition of eternal life; and that they are not necessary any further than as they lay a foundation for a finner's confidence before God, or contribute fomething toward his acceptance with God: and therefore their great concern is to obtain some experience of a renewing work of the divine Spirit on their own fouls, of to feel fome good motions in their hearts, as evidences of conversion, faith, repentance, &c. on which they may found their hopes of acceptance with God and everlafting happiness.

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While those persons are thus labouring hard to find something about themselves, on which they may rest their hopes of justification and salvation, their exercise may nearly resemble that which sollows upon a gracious and saving work of the Spirit of God upon the souls of his num people, when he first brings them to acquaintance with himself; and they may have many things about them similar to the experiences of a true Christian; yet still they are only seeking to obtain righteousness as it were by the works of the law; and the more success they have in their endeavours of this kind, the more are the pride and natural enmity of their hearts

hearts, against the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, strengthened and confirmed. And when they have once got themselves possessed of a strong imagition, that they have already undergone the gracious change which in Scripture is called regeneration and conversion, and think they have ground to look upon themselves as believers and true penitents, their condition is in some respects more dangerous than that of those who have hitherto been engaged in a course of open profanity, and never had any serious concern about salvation. Yea it may be as truly affirmed of such, as of the Pharisees of old, that publicans and barlots shall go into the kingdom of God before them.

Now one principal cause of this practical and soul-ruining error, too common among the hearers of the gospel, besides their not attending to what the Scripture teaches concerning the necessity of a persect righteousness in order to acceptance with God, whose infinite justice and holiness will not admit that a sinner be received into sayour, or have any friendly intercourse with him, till he is possessed of a righteousness answering all the demands of his law, is their not considering that the total depravation of man's nature by sin has rendered that gracious change wrought upon the soul in regeneration, conversion and sandification, necessary to ends and purposes very different from that of recommending the sinner to the sayour of God, or intitling him to eternal happiness; a purpose it was never intended for.

Those persons forget, that it is a chief part of

Those persons forget, that it is a chief part of man's misery by nature, not only that he has lost all spiritual strength, so as to be wholly incapable of serving God, or performing any acceptable act of obsdience to the law of God, till his heart is changed and renewed by the power of divine grace; but

also that he wants a righteousness wherein to appear before God; a righteousness every way perfect, without which he can never have any comfortable intercourse with God, enjoy his favour, or be intitled to everlasting happiness; and that such a righteousness is not only what he can never of himself work out, or obtain by any of his own endeavours; but also what no change wrought upon his soul, nothing done by him or wrought in

him, can ever amount to.

God never communicates his Spirit or bestows his grace upon fallen men to affist them in working out a righteousness of their own for appealing his wrath, or procuring his favour, but only to enable them to apprehend, receive, and take the benefit of that righteousness which he in his infinite wisdom and love has provided for the justification of the guilty; and to fit them for communion with himself, and the actual enjoyment of all those blessings and privileges that were purchased, for elect finners, by that divine righteousness which was wrought out by the Son of God in the human nature, and is brought near to the guilty in the promises and dispensation of the everlasting gospel.

And though men often please themselves with counterseits of the true grace of God manifested, and communicated in regeneration and begun sanctification; and, through the working of pride, and that strong bias toward seeking righteousness, by the works of the law, that is in the heart of every man by nature, are apt to put them in the room of the divine righteousness; that righteousness through which alone a guilty sinner can be justified, and which is revealed in the gospel, from saith to saith; yet none who are the real subjects of a renewing and sanctifying work of the divine Spirit, can thus totally miscarry; it being one spe-

cial design of the whole work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and conversion, to bring sinners off from all considence in their own righteousness, experiences and attainments; in any thing done by them, or wrought in them; in the matter of justification before God.

This is also the great design of all that preparatery work of the Spirit of God, upon the consciences
and hearts of men, which has been ordinarily deferibed under the notion of conviction of sin, compunction, contrition, bumiliation, &c. and reckoned,
at least in some degree, necessary in order to a believing on the Son of God, or accepting the gift of
righteousness that is brought near to sunners in the

gospel ..

Men, through the natural pride of their hearts. are indeed very apt to abuse what is taught in the word of the Lord concerning those things : they too often make a wrong improvement of all that is affirmed concerning the necessity of conversion. faith, repentance, boliness and obedience to the law of God; fo as to conclude from thence, that these are necessary, at least, as part of a sinner's justifying righteousness before God. But it would be a strange way of reasoning, from the abuse of what is declared and inculcated concerning these things, to infer, that none can maintain the necessity of conviction, regeneration, conversion, and faith, as an act of the foul apprehending, receiving and refting upon Christ and his righteousness exhibited in the gospel, without depreciating and obscuring the glory of the divine righteoulness. One might as well affirm, that it was unwarrantable to exhort the Jews to yield obedience either to the ceremonial or moral law, and maintain the necessity of doing fo; because the Pharifees, and other felf-justiciaries amongst them, made their external conformity

to both these laws the ground of their acceptance with God; and hence took occasion to strengthen and encourage themselves in their opposition to Christ, and the true doctrine of the gospel revealing his righteousness as that alone by which guilty sinners can be justified: yet such wretched sophistry is the most of Palemon's reasoning against what he

calls the popular doctrine.

Had this Gentleman employed his talents in detecting the mistakes, and shewing the danger of those, who, through that strong propensity to feek righteousness and life by the works of the law that is naturally in every man, form wrong notions of almost all the doctrines of the gospel; and from what is taught in Scripture, and by orthodox divines, agreeably thereto, concerning the necessity of comviction of fin by the law, regeneration, conversion, faith, repentance, polinefs, evangelical obedience, and the like; conclude, that these are no otherwise commanded and required, than as they constitute either the whole, or part of that righteousness by which a finner is justified before God: and accordingly, labour to attain them, with no other view than to recommend themselves to his favour; and when once they imagine they have obtained any experience of that work of the divine Spirit by which the gracious change and dispositions aforementioned, are wrought in the foul, make it the ground of their hope and confidence before God: thus putting their own exercises, experiences and attainments in the room of Christ, and his perfect righteoufness; I should have had no quarrel with him. But to charge ministers of the gospel with corrupting and perverting the truth, deceiving and destroying the fouls of men, merely because, following Scripture-light, they endeavour, according to the ability subjet God gives, to explain the nature, and evince the necessity of a work of the divine Spirit upon the hearts of men, convincing them of their sin, guilt and misery, and determining them to believe on the Son of God; or because they exhort sinners to a diligent use of all the means of divine appointment whereby, God usually conveys his grace into the hearts of men, and brings his people to the saving knowledge of himself; shews such a degree of ignorance, impudence, and malice, as I believe will hardly be found with any but the votaries of that new and extraordinary doctrine which the letter-writer has thought sit to recommend to us, under the name of the ancient apostolic gospel.

Thole, whom this prefumptuous and brain-fick writer is pleased to call the popular preachers, urge the necessity of regeneration, faith, and union with Christ, in order to an actual participation of the fruits and benefits of his purchase, and call sinners to bear that their fouls may live; to wait at-Wifdom's gates for Wildom's gifts; or, diligently to use all the means of grace, in and by which God is pleased to manifest himself to the fouls of men. communicate his grace to them, and bring them to acquaintance with himself. And hence he infers, that thus they teach their hearers to do, or endeavour, fomething toward their acceptance with God; or hold forth a preliminary human righteoufnels, as some way expedient, or rather necessary, in order to their enjoying benefit and comfort of the divine righteoulnels.

Such reasoning is truly extraordinary, and what fome ignorant and simple readers will no doubt impute to an uncommon degree of penetration; but the intelligent and judicious will easily perceive, that it merits the highest contempt, and the most ferious indignation of all who have any regard for

REVIEWED and EXAMINED. TOT the purity of the gospel, and the interests of real godliness, and would not be imposed upon in matters of the last importance. Did not our Lord exbort his hearers to labour, not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life? Did not he and his apostles urge the necessity of regeneration, faith, and union with him. in order to obtain an actual interest in his righteoufness and salvation? And is it not for urging the very same things, that Palæmon censures the popular preachers, with whom he has the warmest controverly, as deceivers and destroyers of mankind; as teaching their hearers to establish a righteousness of their own; thus flattering their pride, and obscuring the glory of the divine righteousness, &c. ? Do not the reproaches which he so liberally throws out against the latter, then, fall equally heavy upon the former?

After a due examination of this author's tenets, and the scope of his reasoning against those who have endeavoured to explain what the Scripture teaches concerning the nature, necessity, adjuncts, and effects of that gracious work, which is wrought upon the hearts of finners by the divine Spirit, in regeneration and conversion; it will be found, that it is not the popular doctrine, but the Scripture-doctrine, concerning the method in which the Lord Jefus is pleased to apply the benefits of redemption to his chosen people, that he so disingenuously misrepresents. and fo spitefully inveighs against. And as he frequently ridicules the account which is given of that matter in the Sacred Oracles, and, on some occasions, does not scruple even to scoff at the very words and phrases which the Holy Ghost teacheth : it will

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[•] Letters, p. 73-285, &c.

be far more easy to prove him guilty of daring impiety and blasphemy, than to fix a charge of error and prevarication upon the popular preachers, in their attempts to explain the doctrines of Chris-

tiany.

We shall now take notice of another capital mistake concerning the method by which fallen men are recovered from that wretched and deplorable condition which all mankind are naturally in. This together with the former arises from ignorance, or the want of suitable views of the original corruption of human nature derived from Adam, as the native and necessary consequence of his first

transgression.

There are not a few, who, having never had any just sense of the total depravity of their nature, and neglecting to give proper attention to what the Scripture teaches concerning man's natural condition since the fall, seem to imagine, that to restore sallen men to the enjoyment of that happiness which they forfeited by the breach of the law or covenant of works, nothing more is necessary than the tender of a perfect righteousness intitling them to it, or a righteousness by which they may be lastified.

Could

This is the leading error of Autinomians, and many others who live under the dispensation of the gospel. Both Legalists and Antinomians appear to agree in this; that nothing is necessary to salvation besides a justifying righteousness; which the former endeavour to work out themselves, and the latter pretend to find only in Christ. If the Legalist could once imagine himself to be possessed of this, he would give himself little trouble about the practice of holiness or obedience to the law of God. Hence we may observe, that the transition from Legalism

Could we suppose that man by his fall lost only his interest in the divine favour, or a righteousness in which he might appear before God with acceptance, and which might be sufficient to intitle him to everlasting happiness according to the tenor of the law of works; or that the whole of his mifery confifts in his becoming obnoxious to the divine wrath; this notion would indeed be just. In this cafe, besides the expiation of his guilt, and the providing him with a perfect righteousness, on which he might found a claim to everlasting life, nothing would have been necessary to his redemption and recovery; or, to use the words of the letter-writer, the knowledge of Christ's bare work finished upon the crofs would have been sufficient for his justification and falvation, provided he was allowed to take the benefit and comfort of it; which yet is more than that extraordinary author will admit.

Further; however much need men, on this supposition, might have had of a Saviour by price, they would have had no occasion for a Saviour by power; and whatever grace might be manifested in the purchase, there would have been no room for any display thereof in the application of redemption, further than what might be contained in the simple revelation of it. But if we consult the Sacred Writings, we will find them giving a very different account of the matter, while they represent man's natural state as a state of sin, as well as a state of wrath; and inform us, that he has soft the image, as well as the favour of God; that he is naturally under the power, as well

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igali/m tism to Antinomianism is very easy; and thus we need be at no loss to account for Palemon's conversion, and the contempt he pours upon those religious treatises and discourses, on which he tells us he formerly endea-woured to form his bears. Letters, &c. p. 87.

F 4

as the guilt of fin; that he is without firength, as well as without righteousness; and, in short, that his whole nature is corrupted; so that he can neither do nor will any thing that is truly and spiritually good; and therefore can neither know, believe, nor love the truth, till his nature is changed and renewed by the power of divine grace.

In this case, it is easy to see, that he needs redemption by power, as well as redemption by price; and such a Saviour as has, not only a sulness of merit for his justification, but also a sulness of the

Spirit for his regeneration and fanclification.

Had the Son of God undertaken to do no more than make an atonement for fin, and work out a sighteousness for the justification of the guilty, and not also to apply the merit of his righteousness by the special efficacy of his Spirit, and redeem lost men from the dominion of fin and tyranny of Satan, in the day of his power, he would only have been a half-Saviour. It is true, by his righteousness and blood he fulfilled the condition of the new covenant, and made a compleat purchase of all spiritual bleffings to his people; on which account, by his death on the cross, he is faid to have finished the work that was given bim to do. The purchase of redemption might be faid to be the work that was given him to do; because it included whatever belonged to the conditionary part of the new covenant. The application of redemption, though his work, and a part of it equally necessary with the former, belongs rather to the promissory part of the covenant, and to the exercise of that great power and authority with which, as Mediator, he is invefted, in confequence of his fulfilling the condition of that covenant which the Father made with him. And as it supposes a sulness of all spiritual bleffings received by him, as the head of the new CO- covenant, according to the agreement between the Father and him in that wonderful transaction, it may be viewed, rather as part of his reward than part of his work*. And therefore, though it still remained to be effected, and is as necessary in order to the salvation of sinners, as any thing he had formerly done in the purchase of redemption, when this was finished, it might with great propriety be said, that he had finished the work which was given him to do.

But after he had finished the work of redemption as to purchase, still a very necessary part of his work remained to be done, in order to the falvation of perifhing finners, namely, the actual delivering of them from the power of fin and Satan, and putting them in possession of the several benefits he had purchased for them by his righteousness and death. Such are their circumstances by nature. that it was not only necessary that he should pay a full price for their redemption, but he must also. come and bring them actually out of the prisonhouse. This is one way in which he may be faid to redeem the lawful captives, as well as by purchaling their liberty. And when God deals effectually with the heart of a finner, he is convinced. no less of his need of the Spirit and grace of Christ

for his fanctification, than of the righteoutines of. Christ for his justification; both being equally necessary to his recovery out of that wretched and miserable condition which he and all mankind are:

in by nature:

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The Scripture gives as this view of the matter, while it represents our Lord Jesus Christ as humbling himself to make the purchase, but exalted to dispense the blessings of redemptions Philip. ii. 8: Ephel. i. 7. Pfal. lxix, 4. Us. lini. 12. Ass. v. 31. Pfal. lxviii. 18. compare Ephel. iv. 2.

Here I shall take the liberty to quote a passage from the writings of a well-known author, in which, I think, this matter is fet in a very clear light. His words are as follow. " Before there " could be reconciliation made," between an offended God and offending finners, " there must be " two things effected; 1st, A fatisfaction of God's justice; 2dly, A reparation of man's nature : which two things must needs be effected " by fuch a middle and common person as had : " both zeal towards God, that he might be fatisfiet ed; and compassion towards man, that he might " be repaired; fuch a person as, having man's. suilt and punishment translated on him, might " fatisfy the justice of God, and, as having a fulness of God's Spirit and holiness in him, might of fanctify and repair the nature of man. And this could be none other but Jesus Christ, one of the three person's of the blessed Trinity. And therefore he, by his Father's ordination, his own voluntary susception, and the Holy Spirit's fanc-" tification, was fitted for the bulinels."

Another judicious writer delivers his fentiments on this head in the following manner. "As man lay in ruins by the fall, guilty and unclean, there flood in the way of his falvation by mercy deligned, 1st, The justice of God, which could not admit the guilty creature; and, adly, The holiness of God, which could not admit the unclean and unholy creature to communion with him. Therefore, in the contrivance of his falvation, it was necessary, that provision should be made for the satisfaction of God's justice, by payment of the double debt mentioned above; namely, the debt of punishment, and the debt of perfect obedience. It was also necessary, that provision should be wision should be made for the fancishcation of the

Art, V. REVIEWED and EXAMINED.

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finner, the repairing of the lost image of God in him. And man being as unable to sanctify himself, as to satisfy justice (a truth which proud nature cannot digest) the Saviour behoved not, only to obey and suffer in his stead; but also to have a sulness of the Spirit of Holiness in him, to communicate to the sinner, that his nature might be repaired, through sanctification of the Spirit. Thus was the ground-work of man's, salvation laid in the eternal council; the sanctification of the sinner, being as necessary to his salvation, as the satisfaction of justice; for indeed the necessity of the former, as well as of the latter, ariseth from the nature of God, and there-

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The not attending to this has been the fource of all those Pelagian, Arminian and Antinomian errors, by which some have endeavoured to darken and corrupt the doctrines of the gospel. And an intelligent reader, who will take the trouble narrowly to examine that new scheme of princples which Ralamon has thought fit to prefent to the public, inhis letters on Theron and Aspaso, will readily agreewith me in affirming, that it is nothing but a collection of those different errors, blended together with a little art, and fometimes concealed under a veil of obscure, mystical and unmeaning phrases or modes of expression: for this Gentleman excels. most writers I have any acquaintance with, in a talent of a very peculiar nature, by the help of which he can make thift to speak a great deal without faying any thing. And indeed never could Protous assume more shapes; though, it must be owned, he does not change them with fuch dexterity. as would be necessary to conceal the gross absurdities and palpable inconfiltencies of his scheme.

This Gentleman fometimes puts on the mask of a zealous contender for the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, particularly that of justification by saith alone without the works of the law; at other times one would take him to be Antinomian all over. When he appears in another form, an acute Arminian, I am persuaded, would acknowledge him for a brother, and give him the right-hand of sellowship. On some other occasions a good Roman Catholic would have no cause to disown an affinity with him; yet at other times he might easily be taken for a modern insidel, whose religion chiefly consists in visifying and scotting at all serious godlines, and any thing that resembles or has the

least appearance of it.

2113

We have already observed, that the implantation of the grace of Christ, or a renewing and lanctifying work of his Spirit, is no less necessary to the falvation of a finner than the imputation of his righteousness. But though the letter-writer, onsome occasions, affects to talk in very high strains can have no place in his scheme. In his elaborate differtations on reason and spirit he pretends to give some account of the original corruption of human mature; but his reasonings on this head are so mystical and obscure, that it would require no uncommon degree of penetration to find out his meaning, or determine with certainty what are his real fentiments concerning that corrupt and finful state, which, it is acknowledged, all men since the fall of Adam are naturally in. He supposes there are nasurally in every man a ffrong propentity to forget his natural dependence on God, and to entertain and cherish deceitful notions of his own dignity; but we could wish he had more clearly informed us, how this propensity came to take place, and be so deeply rooted in human nature. He tells us indeed, "that this cannot be accounted for any other way so well as by the Scripture";" but he has not thought sit to take any particular notice of what the Scripture teaches concerning it, further than to observe, in allusion to the parable of the sower and the seed, that an enemy hath done this; which is far enough from giving us any distinct account of what is declared in the Inspired Writings concerning this important article of the Christian saith, without some suitable knowledge of which, it is impossible to form just notions of any other article of the Christian doctrine.

The Scripture informs us, that the nature of man fince the fall is wholly corrupted; that his under-flanding is darkened, his will perverse, and in every respect opposite to the will of God; and consequently averse to every thing that is really or spi-

ritually good, and prone to all evil.

et in From this plain, though short description of human nature, as new corrupted, it is easy to account, not only for that strong propensity that is naturally in every man to cherish a deceitful sense of his own dignity, but also for all those proud imaginations, and perverse reasonings, by which he strengthens himself in opposition to the truth of the gospel, or the true doctrine of the grace of God; as also for all those irregular appetites, corrupt affections, and vitious inclinations, which prompt him to transgress and disobey the divine commands.

Palamon often speaks of a principle famly settled in the hearts of men, inclining them to oppose what the gospel reveals; but he seldom or

^{*} Letters, &c. p. 171.

never takes any particular notice of their natural avertion to what the divine law requires, or of their natural propensity to do what the law forbids. And it is observable, that, when giving an account of the corruption of human nature, he never makes the least mention of man's natural impotency, or inability, to yield obedience to the law of God, or do that which is well-plealing in his fight. Yea, he feems to infinuate, that this is no part of man's natural mifery; but that every man, if hewill, may do what is really good and acceptable to God : and that to incline his will to perform what obedience the divine law requires, nothing. elfe is necessary but a due improvement of his natural notions, and the right exercise of his reasoning powers : for he tells us, " that the gospel affirms, in the strongest manner, all the notices of God. and all the reasons of duty naturally imprinted in his conscience, and adds to them what was e entirely wanting before, namely, a divine reason es of hope "

Now this divine reason of hope, according to our author, is nothing but the history of the death and refurrection of Jelus recorded in the New Teltament; which, when any one believes, as every man must do who duly attends to the evidence of the facts therein related, he becomes possessed of that faith which is the spring of all true holiness and obedience to God. This doubtless any one may do by the mere exercise of natural reason; and in the fame manner, he may acquire that knowledge of the genuine import of those sacts which the letter-writer supposes to be implied in inflifying faith.

4 This off:

That these are our author's real fentiments concerning this matter, is evident from his own words: for, fays he, " When the truth of the gospel takes of place in the heart of a man, it does by no-" means fet afide the use of his reasoning faculty;" he might have added, nor suppose the renovation of it by any internal and supernatural operationof the Spirit; " but rather, by enlarging the "bounds of his knowledge, provides it with a new or province, wherein it may exercise itself with " greater certainty and delight. It affirms in the " ftrongest manner all the notices of God, all. "the reasons of duty naturally imprinted in his " conscience; and adds to them what was entire-" ly wanting before, namely, a divine reason of " hope. And thus it disintangles him from the " necessity wherewith he found himself pressed, of " debating his own nature, and defacing the divinecharacter, by reasoning on mele presumptions, " in order to invent fome ground of hope for his temporary Support: The friclest reasoner, then, can have no objection against the gospel, unless is he will quarrel with it, because it provides guilty " man with a fource of comfort without the aid of " his reasoning faculty, or where all his natural " funds for reasoning proved utterly deficient."

Afterwards our author expresses himself in the following manner: "We have no natural notions helping us to conceive how God can raise one who has suffered death for sing to an endless life of pleasure, absolutely free from all pain.
Neither have we any notions helping us to conceive how God can justify an unjust person, without his doing any thing to make himself just; or how he can impart righteousness to such a one, so as he may be suffained as a righteous person, in all respects, in his presence, and accordingly

cordingly intitled to everlasting happiness. Yet " if it appears by undeniable evidence, that God " hath raifed one from death to eternal happiness, and the justification of the unjust be declared as the genuine import of this fact, and the same s power that was manifest in raising the dead, appear attending this declaration; then, upon my " conviction of the truth of the refurrection, I may conceive how God can also justify the ungodly; especially if I find it impossible to account for " what has actually happened any other way. If it appear by the circumstances, that he who died, and rofe, was not only a righteous, but also a divine " person; if it appear impossible that such a person " should lead a life of painful service, and at last be-" come exceeding forrowful unto death, unless to exes piate the fins of others, and furnish them with a es righteousness; and if it also appear impossible, " that one fuffering death for fin, should be raised" again to a happy life, unless the divine displea-" fure against sin had been fully manifested in his so fuffering; or that one undertaking to fulfil a " righteousness, should be honoured with a refurrection, if he had failed in his undertaking if, at any time, my conscience condemn me as " an unrighteous person, and exclude all hope of 44 relief from any natural fource : if, I fay, my thoughts come thus to be straitned on every of other fide, I must find a very fensible relief to e my mind, in admitting the declaration issued in "the belom of the evidence of the refurrection, « viz, that he who died and rofe again, was deliwered for our offences, and was raised again for our ' jud i or he we can ampart in the secretario feel."

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We find a great deal more to the same purpose in our author's letters; yea a great part of his book contains nothing but idle repetitions of what is advanced in the passages just now quoted, which indeed contain the very substance of his doctrine concerning the misery of man's natural state and his recovery out of it. But his sentiments, with regard to these matters, will be found not only opposite to what the Scripture teaches concerning man's natural corruption by sin, and his recovery by grace, but a very sink of errors and abominations. Here the most gross Arminianism and Antinomianism are so artfully blended together, as to form a scheme seemingly opposite to both, while really it contains the very quintessence of both.

According to this scheme, if a man stung with remorfe and a fense of guilt, which on many occasions he can hardly avoid, will only admit the truth of the resurrection, or that Christ died and role again for the benefit of the guilty; or give a rational affent to this proposition, That Jesus was, delivered for our offences, and role again for our justification, which he may and must do, if he acknowledges the Scripture to be the word of God, and attends to the evidence of the facts recorded in the New Testament, he commences a true believer. And the affent which he gives to that truth, fo as to find some kind of relief to his mind or conscience, is justifying faith, and the spring of all true, love and obedience to God. Having this faith, he becomes immediately furnished with every Christian, grace, with every good disposition and affection necessary to influence him in the practice of holiness. In short, by that which every thinking man must acknowledge to be no more than an act of natural reason, having revealed truth for its object, he is justified and fanctified, becomes a new man. work.

Should we attempt to prove, that this is the very reverse of what the Scripture teaches concerning the misery of man by nature, the way of salvation by grace, and the necessity of a supernatural work of the divine Spirit upon the souls of men, to convince them of sin, enlighten their minds in the knowledge of Christ, renew their wills, and determine them to believe on the name of the Son of God; as also to incline and enable them to perform acceptable obedience to the divine law; it would only be to affront the understanding of any reader who has the least acquaintance with the Sacred Writings. And, indeed, to make good this point, we needed only transcribe the several passages in the Old and New Testament, in which the least mention is made of any of the particulars above-named.

Hence it appears, that the letter-writer does not without reason shew a warm opposition to what all found divines, fince the commencement of Chrisdanity, have taught concerning the special agency of the Spirit of God in the beginning, and carrying on a work of grace and holiness in the hearts of believers, or in applying the benefits of redemp. tion purchased by Christ to his chosen people; for according to his scheme that is altogether unnecessary; as a natural conscience in every man, and his own reason, furnished with a new object of knowledge, or the truths of the gospel as materials to work upon, do fully supply the place of it. And it must be owned, that with no less reason he rejects that fende of the words, grace, conversion, regeneration, boliness, &c. which has hitherto been given by all who have paid any due regard to what the Scripture teaches in relation to thefe. matters: for grace, conversion, regeneration, boliness, &c. which Christians have hitherto thought themselves sufficiently warranted to call fruits of a gracious operation of the divine Spirit upon the souls of men, must, in his opinion, all be the produce of unrenewed nature improved by divine revelation; which every man, merely by the affistance of natural reason, may fully understand, believe, and attain the whole benefit of. But to affert, that this is the sense given of the words abovementioned, in the New Testament, shews a degree of impudence, that is truly aftonishing, and seems to

be Palemon's peculiar characteristic.

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Though, from what has been already observed, it appears, that the whole of that religion which the author of the letters to earnestly contends for, confilts only in fuch an improvement of the golpel-revelation, as corrupt and unenlightened reason. directs to, with some extravagant and whimsical conceits that have no foundation either in Scripture or reason; yet if he only meets with the wordvational in any of the writings or discourses of his antagonists concerning religion, he immediately takes occasion to charge them with fetting forth a merely rational, or natural scheme of justification, and confequently with corrupting and perverting the gospel of Christ, and obscuring the glory of the divine grace and fovereignty. Thus, he is pleafed to tell us, that the popular preachers sometimes. fet forth as rational and natural a scheme of justification as any philosopher could defire. For proof of this, he refers his reader to a passage in a fermon preached by that eminent and judicious divine Mr. Thomas Boston.

"Mr. Boffon," Tays this Gentleman, " as if he had learned to apply mathematics to the

Letters, &c. p. 167.

"Christian doctrine, is ready to shew us by what ratio or rule of proportion we are to expect the " favours of divine grace or pardoning mercy to be diffributed among men, who are yet acknow-Ledged to be equally destitute of any claim upon that grace, in a fermon upon Luke xxiii. 42. intitled, The extraordinary case of the thief upon the cross, &c. He says, it is unreasonable to think, that it should fare at the last with those who have had means of grace all their days, and despised them, as it may do with those who of never have fuch means until they come to die." Afterwards he tells us, " that it is very common " with this eminent preacher, and others of 4 his class, when they emerge a little out of " their depths, to address their hearers thus:-" But we must deal with you as with rational creatures, and work upon you by rational arguas ments."

Hence Palames would have his readers believe, that the scheme of religion recommended by these worthy men, in their sermons and writings, is wholly sounded upon those dictates of human reason by which men endeavour to fortify themselves in their opposition to the truth of the gospel; though they have fallen upon a notable expedient for concealing their own real sentiments, by having frequent recourse to mystery, and plunging into their favourite depths, whereby they endeavour to consound, and perplex the minds of their readers, or hearers, who otherwise might easily perceive the native scope and tendency of their doctrine.

Was there ever a greater degree of impotent malice than is discovered in these infinuations? Are there not many texts of Scripture that a profane wrangler might pun upon in the same man-

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nor the letter-writer has done upon the words of Mr. Boston, above-quoted? Does not the Spirit of God, in the Scriptures, frequently intimate, that the condition of fuch who have all their days abused and despited the means of grace, and rejected all the calls and invitations of mercy they have been privileged with, is far less hopeful, and more dangerous, than that of thole who never enjoyed fuch privileges? If any doubt of this, we shall only defire them to consult the following texts of Scripture, Pfal. lxxxi. 11, 12. Prov. i. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. Ifa. vi. 9, 10. Fer. vi. 8. Hof. iv. 17. Luke xiii. 34, 35. Does not our Lord warn many who had attended his public ministry, and been privileged with the calls and offers of his grace, and yet misimproved the former, and rejected the latter, that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrab in the day of judgment than for them? Does he not plainly intimate, that their case was, even then, far less hopeful than that of those who never enjoyed the benefit of divine revelation ??

It is easy to see, that these words of our Lord, and the passages of Scripture formerly quoted, would furnish the letter-writer with abundantly more matter for displaying his critical talent upon, and give more occasion for his impertinent cavils, than any thing advanced by Mr. Boston +, in that

• Matt. xi. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

† I have omitted the title of Reverend, least it should offend our author; who carries his refentment, not against the popular preachers only, but against ministers of the gospel in general, so far, as to envy them the small degree of honour and respect imported therein, which has been usually paid to their office and character. Why he should bear such a grudge against mea invested with that character, I know not, unless we may suppose he hates them for their work's sake.

passage of his fermon which he has thought fit to criticife upon, and censure in such a scornful man-

And if it is really so, this, of itself, is sufficient to thew the difference between his extraordinary scheme of principles and the apostolic gospel; the former being accompanied with a temper of mind quite oppofite to the spirit of the latter, which taught men, not to hate and reproach, but to honour and effeem those that fear the Lord, particularly ministers of the gospel, for their work's Jake; I Thef. v. 12, 13. If the word reveend could admit no other fepfe but that in which it is used when applied to the divine Majesty, of whom it is faid, boly and reverend is bis name; to give that title to any mortal would certainly be both impious and blasphemous: but if it indicates only some degree of respect, honour and esteem, due to ministers of the gespel for their office and work's sake; and indeed as it is commonly used and applied to them it can import no more; I think we may affirm, that the letterwriter shews himself to be, not only somewhat nice. but really whimfical, in afferting that those who admit the title of reverend shew an inclination to share more or less of the worship due to him whom we praise, faying, boly and reverend is bis name.

To compare it with the arrogant and blasphemous title commonly given to the Pope by the members of the Anti-christian church, as if these titles were used in the fame fenfe, and of a like import, is invidious; and his infinuation, J. 121, 122, of his letters, that the words of our Lord to the young man in the gospel, Matt. xix. 17. do simply condemn the giving the epithet of good to any creature, is founded on an ignorant, or perhaps wilful mistake of the true scope and meaning of the passage. For it is plain, that our Lord had no intention, by these words, simply to condemn a giving the epithet of good to any dependent being, but rather to reprove and check a flattering humour, which perhaps had prompted the young man to give

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Art. V. REVIEWED and EXAMINED.

ner. And indeed it may be questioned, if any writer ever went a greater length in wresting, contradicting and blaspheming divine truths revealed in the Scripture, without throwing off the mask and directly impugning the authority of the Sacred Ora-

cles, than Palemon has done.

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As it would be needless to pursue this author through all the tiresome and intricate paths of error in which he endeavours to intangle his unwary reader, we must content ourselves with giving only a few hints, that perhaps may be of use for detecting some of the more palpable absurdities and gross abominations which ly concealed in his writings, so as frequently to elude the observation of the simple and inattentive; and therefore we shall here finish our remarks on this article.

him that title; or to instruct him concerning his own divinity, and remind him of the important truth; that there is none originally and essentially good, but one; that is, God: though the term may also warrantably be applied to creatures in an inserior and subordinate sense, as it really is in several places of Scripture; 2 Sam. xviii. 27. Pfal. cxii. 5. Luke xxiii. 50. Alis xi. 24. Rom. v. 7.

Now, fince Palemon allows, that it is as unlawful to apply the epithet of good, as to give the title of reverend, to any creature, the charge of an impious and blasphemous usurpation of the divine prerogative, is, what the inspired penmen of facred writ must be equally obnoxious to, with those who either give, or allow the title of reverend to be given to men in facred office.

One thing we frankly yield to the letter-writer, namely, that REVEREND SIR is no less obnoxious to reprehension than GOOD MASTER; though, the truth is, as appears from what has been already observed, the simple and common use of neither the one nor the other of these epithets, is, in the least, unlawful or liable to reprehension,

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ARTICLE VI.

THE RE is no need of any internal, supernatural work of the Spirit of God upon the souls and bearts of men for discovering and subduing that corruption which is naturally in every man, and reigns in every unregenerate sinner; but if they only bearken to the voice of God in the conscience, and admit the simple truth revealed in the gospel, it is all that is necessary for those purposes.

REMARKS

HOSE who will take the trouble to read the letters on Theren and Afpasis, and narrowly examine the account which the author gives of what he calls regeneration, or the new birth; especially if they, at the same time, consider the reproaches, and bitter invectives, which he every where throws out against those whom he calls the popular preachers, for teaching the necessity of an internal work of the Spirit of God upon the hearts and consciences of men, in order to convince them of fin, subdue their natural corruption, and fanctify their fouls; together with his profane fcoffing at the work of the Holy Ghost in conviction, convertion, regeneration and fanctification; will find that I have not at all milrepresented, or disguised his doctrine and fentiments on this head, but faid before the reader what must be acknowledged to be the scope and substance of a great, part of his reasoning against the doctrine taught by all found Protestant divines divines concerning the points above-mentioned. And it is evident, that the chief reason why he inveighs with fo much warmth against his antagonists, is, because their sentiments are wholly repugnant to his own profane and impious notions concerning these matters.

He does not merely blame those teachers for want of caution, inaccuracy, or any mistakes in defcribing the internal work of the Holy Ghoft upon the fouls of men, but for afferting, that any fuch thing is necessary. It is not the abuse of what has been taught concerning it that offends him; but it is the thing itself that he shews so much

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That part of the Christian doctrine which relates to the gracious work of the divine Spirit upon the hearts of believers, in their effectual calling and conversion, is, no doubt, liable to be mistaken and misimproved. And we have reason to think, " it has been frequently abused by men, for gratifying their natural pride and cherishing their false hopes of heaven and everlasting happiness; while they have rested their hope of salvation upon fome motions, feelings, impressions and impulses within their own breasts; and thus put them in the room of Chrift, and his righteoufness, exhibited in the word and promises of the gospel. Had Palamon only made it his business to detect, and warn his readers against this, or the like dangerous and foul-ruining abuses of that doctrine, it might have been of service to some, and a mean of keeping them from that hurtful fnare which Satan and their own proud hearts are very apt to draw them into.

But, instead of using his endeavours this way. he has laid a far more dangerous fnare for the fouls of those into whose hands his performance VOL. I. may may come, by attempting to persuade them, that there is no such thing to be experienced, expected or desired, as an inward work of the Spirit of God upon their hearts; yea, that one who is prefently allowing, and hardening himself in the practice of all manner of wickedness, may commence a true believer, and be justified, if he only admits the truth of what is recorded in the New Testament concerning the death and resurrection of Christ; though, in the mean time, his love to sin, and resolution to persevere in the practice of it, are as strong as ever. If this is not a doctrine that opens a door for all kinds of licentiousness, and tends to harden sinners in a course of impiety and wickedness, I know not what can be said to do so.

Perhaps the devil himself could never have invented an engine more effectual for supporting, and promoting all the interests of his kingdom in the world, and in the hearts of men, than this, especially as it is improved by the letter-writer, must be acknowledged to be. It is so far from being, like the true apostolic gospel, a doctrine which is according to godliness, that it has a manifest tendency to banish all serious religion and godliness out of the world, and expose those with whom the least appearance of any such thing is to be found,

to the utmost contempt.

But as the substance of this article has been already considered and examined, here I shall only present the reader with a sew extracts from the letters on Theron and Aspasio, and leave the unprejudiced to judge, whether I have done the author any injury in affirming, that the strange scheme of doctrine which he has thought sit to recommend to the public, wholly excludes any special

agency, or fupernatural operation, of the divine Spirit, in the conviction of finners, and in the regeneration, convertion and fanctification of believers; and leaves all who may think fit to adopt the same, at liberty to make themselves merry with, and ridicule all experiences of any thing of that kind that have been hitherto attained by Christians, as what they may do in full confistency

with their new principles.

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The work of the Spirit of God in convincing finners of fin, though, by all who have any fuitable acquaintance with the Scriptures or their own hearts, it must be acknowledged to be absolutely necessary * in order to a believing on the Son of God, the author of the letters profanely terms the " idle process of a law-work +." And elsewhere he expresses himself in the following manner: " It is now time to take some notice of the requifites infifted for, in order that one's title to the bleffing may appear; conviction, &c. One must have feen little of the deceits of the popular fermons, if he has not perceived what large work is cut out for the pride of the devotee, in the doctrine about convictions of guilt. So many directions are given, such care and pains, and fuch exercises of mind are required, for attaining proper convictions, that it is by no means to be wondered at, if the foul, devoutly employed in thefe, fhould entertain fome queftion like this: Whether the pains taken to find himself guilty, and the distinction he thereby acquires above the careless and profane, may not go far to counterbalance all the " guilt he comes in this way to be fenfible of 1?"

In some degree. + Letters, p. 292. 1 Letters, &c. p. 290.

It would be needless to defire an intelligent reader, who has ever fo little acquaintance with those writings and fermons which the letter-writer feems here to have had chiefly in his eye, to observe how shamefully he misrepresents the doctrine taught by those whom he calls the popular preachers on this head. Here, and on all other occasions, he endeavours to make his reader believe, that they taught the necessity of conviction, compunction, &c. which he terms the requisites infifted for, in order to intitle one to the bleffing, or to make one's title to the bleffing appear; but we may challenge him to produce any one fentence, or expression, in the fermons or writings of those excellent men who appear to be the chief objects of his refentment, that will bear fuch a confiruction, without a manifest wresting of their words.

They indeed taught, that men must know, that they are finners, and under a fentence of condemnation by the law of God, before they can welcome, or believe the glad tidings of a Saviour; that they must know they are in misery, before they will embrace the promise, and offer, of mercy; and that they must be convinced of their own unrighteousness, and the insufficiency of all their duties, and endeavours, to avert the wrath of God justly incensed against them for their transpressions, and recommend them to his favour, before they will accept of the gift of righteousness brought near to finners in the gospel. In one word, they affirmed, that finners must be convinced, that all other grounds of hope are false and deceitful, before they will rest their hope of justification and falvation upon Christ alone, or that law-magnifying righteousness which he wrought out in the human nature for the benefit of the guilty,

guilty, and which is revealed, and brought near to them in the gospel, that they may receive, and rest their hopes of acceptance with God and eternal

happiness, wholly upon the same.

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But did those eminent preachers ever teach; that any thing done by men, or wrought in them, any convictions, impressions, feelings, or good motions of any kind, do intitle them to the favour of God, and furnish them with some peculiar claim to the bleffings of the gospel? or that by any thing of that kind they are so distinguished above the rest of mankind, even the most careless and profane, as to be furnished with any further claim upon the Deity than the greatest sinner upon earth who hears the gospel is supposed to have? No: to affirm any fuch thing is so contrary to the whole scope and strain of their doctrine, that, had not Talæmon thought fit to oblige the world with his letters, one would have thought, that their greatest adversaries would scarce have dared to bring such a charge against them as he has done in the passages above-quoted, and many other places of his book; and that malice itself would have blushed to utter the calumniating lie : but we read of some that know no shame; whose foreheads are so steeled with impudence, that they cannot blush*.

But we go on to lay before the reader a few more passages, similar to the former, which we meet with in the letters on Theron, &c. The author of that extraordinary performance reproaches the whole work of the divine Spirit in conversion, after his usual manner, in the following words. I shall here take some further view of the pro"gress of the popular doctrine in England, as also of the counterfeit grace, which may justly

^{*} Zephan, iii, 5. Jerem. vi. 45.

be confidered as the capital characteristic of that " doctrine; even as the true grace of God is the er grand characteristic of the apostolic gospel. The counterfeit grace corresponds with the pre-" liminary faith formerly noted. And the purposeit serves for is, to prepare and qualify men of for, or to make them deferving objects of faving grace; that is, it ferves to qualify fome men " beyond others for being benefited by the great work of mercy and grace finished by Christ on the cross, where alone the saving grace of God. se is manifelted. This preliminary grace, howse ever much it has been Christianized, is at bot-" tom the same thing with that divine afflatus, " influence, or energy, by which it was supposed "philosophers and heroes of old became good 44 and great men*."

Here, and in many other passages of a like nature, Palemon evidently opposes the work finished by Christ on the cross to his whole work upon the hearts of his people; or the grace of God appearing in the purchase, to his grace manifested in the application of redemption; and on pretence of afferting and magnifying the former, he reproaches and vilifies the latter. This is what he calls the counterfeit grace, and impiously affirms, that it is at bottom the fame thing with that divine affatus, influence or energy, by which it was fupposed philosophers and heroes of old became good and great men. And in other parts of his book he blafphemoully infimuates, that any experience or consciousness of it, which omen are supposed to have, ferres only to cherish and gratify their pride, and confirm them in their opposition to the doctrine of the true grace of God preached by the apostles.

Letters, &ce. p. 445.

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An intelligent reader, after carefully examining the passage last quoted, with many others to the fame purpose, needs not be told, that under what the letter-writer profanely calls the counterfeit grace, and the capital characteristic of the popu-Tar doctrine, is comprehended the whole work of the divine Spirit in renewing and fanctifying the fouls of believers; or what the inspired apostle calls the washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and the sanctification of the Spirit*. Thus, if we may believe this impious writer, the grace of God manifested in the effectual vocation of believers; in opening the eyes of their understandings to discern the things of the Spirit-of God; in bringing them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; in persuading, determining and enabling them to receive Christ Jesus freely offered in the gospel; in drawing them to himself, making them willing in the day of his power, creating them again in Christ Jesus unto good works, and in performing and perfecting the work of fanclification begun in their fouls; belongs to that counterfeit grace he speaks of, and affirms to be the same thing with that divine affiatus, by which heroes and other great men of old who never enjoyed the benefit of divine revelation, were supposed to be animated to the performance of great and virtuous actions.

Pelagians and Arminians are wont to magnify the freedom of the human will, in opposition to the free grace of God manifested in the gospel, and in the effectual operation of his holy Spirit on the hearts of the elect: Quakers, and other enthusiasts, are wont to oppose what they call the light and

^{*} Tit. iii. 5. z Thef. ii. 13.

nies the work of his Spirit upon the hearts of his chosen people — may justly be accounted no

This is, at bottom, nothing else but their own blind and depraved reason, which is sometimes influenced and elevated to a greater height of opposition to the truth, by the suggestions, illusions, and impulses of the evil spirit.

less an enemy to the grace and cross of Christ, and the fouls and falvation of men, than if he denied both.

Hence it appears, that Palæmon, instead of being a friend and lover of the true apostolic gospel; a character which he vainly arrogates to himself, and appropriates to those of his fraternity; is really a corrupter and subverter thereof; no less an enemy to the crofs of Christ, and the true doctrine of imputed righteousness, than those who openly impugn, deny, and vilify the fame. How far this charge is just, will best appear by comparing some of his tenets, respecting the matter now under confideration, with the true doctrine of the gospel taught by the apostles, and in other parts of the

Sacred Writings.

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The Spirit of God speaking by the apostles, and other inspired writers, teaches that the power of God, and the energy of his Holy Spirit, must concur with his word, in order to make it effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners: Palamon plainly infinuates that no fuch thing is necel-The inspired writers plainly intimate, that this concurrence, and internal operation of the divine Spirit, may be separated from the external revelation and exhibition of Christ in the gospel; so that the word, however clearly preached, may be, and is to some the favour of death unto death . Palæmon confidently affirms, that the word and Spirit, or the knowledge of the truth and the agency of the divine Spirit, which according to him imports neither more nor less than the former t, are inseparable; so that in no respect whatever it can be truly faid, that the word of God is to any a dead or

^{· 2} Cor. ii. 16. Luke xiii.-34. Isai. vi. 9, 10. Hof. V1. 5. + Letters, p. 361.

PALÆMON'S CREED Art. VI. killing letter*. The apostles teach, that the minds of men must be enlightened from above, before they can receive the things of the Spirit of God, or perceive the least ray of divine glory shining in the face of Fesus Christ, however clearly manifested in the external dispensation of the gospel: this Palamon will not admit; but, in a manner easy to be understood, frequently infinuates, that if any kind of agency, or operation of the divine Spirit, is suppoled to be previous to the actual knowledge and belief of the truth, it must be acknowledged, that something besides the righteousness of Christ, or faith in that righteoulness, is necessary to the justification of a finner; and that to affert the necesfity of any such thing, is to shut up our access to the divine righteousness, and to hold forth a preliminary human one, as fome way expedient, or rather necessary to our enjoying the benefit and comfort of it +.

Further; the aposses teach, that men must have an understanding given them to know him that is true; that, in order to their coming to Christ by faith, they must be drawn by the Father; and that, in order to a receiving and resting upon him, as an all-sufficient Saviour, and submitting and yielding cordial subjection to him, as their King and Lord, a divine power must concur with the word of the gospel, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the abedience of Christ; or, in other words, which the Holy Ghost also uses to denote the same thing, that they must be made willing in the day of his power. But if, with the prophets and apostles, we suppose, that

Letters, p. 34, 35. † Letters, p. 4. 12. 38. 361. † 1 John v. 20. John vi. 44: 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

H Pfal. cx. 3.

any fuch enlightening, renewing and humbling work of the divine Spirit upon the hearts of men, is necessary in order to make them know and believe the truth; so as really to enjoy the benefit and comfort of the divine righteousness, Palæmon will tell us, it belongs to that preliminary counterfeit grace which, if we may believe him, is the capital characteristic of the popular doctrine; and serves only to make those who imagine they have any experience of it, entertain a fond conceit of their own excellency; as if they were more deferving objects of faying grace than the rest of mankind. It were easy to multiply instances of this kind; but we forbear. From those already adduced, we leave the impartial to judge, whether the letterwriter has acted an ingenuous part in dignifying his new scheme of Christianity with the high title

of the ancient apostolic gospel.

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As it must be obvious to every attentive reader, I reckon it unnecessary to observe how artfully and ungenerously, as is the manner of the man, Palamon has misrepresented the doctrine taught by those whom he calls the popular preachers concerning the internal, and supernatural operation of the divine Spirit in regeneration and convertion; as if the scope and tendency of it was to persuade men, that they must have experience, and be conscious of something of this kind, in order to prepare and qualify them for, and make them deferving objects of faving grace; or, which must be his meaning if he speaks to the purpole, to give them a distinguishing right to the bleffings of the gospel, or the benefit of the divine righteousness; whereas it is quite the reverse. For those eminent preachers, whose character he chiefly attacks, when giving an account of a faving work of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men, still declare, that the great design of it is to empty men of all selfrighteousnels, and self-confidence, and to convince them of the folly of all imaginary claims to the divine favour; founded on any personal excellency, attainments, frames, experiences; or, in short, on any thing done by them, or wrought in them, whereby they are distinguished from the rest of mankind. In one word, the leading scope of what they taught on this head was to lead men entirely out of themselves to the Lord Jesus, exhibited in the promises of the gospel, as their righteousness, ftrength, falvation, and all in all. Do they not conftantly affirm, that this is a necessary effect. and the grand characteristic of that gracious work of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of finners. which, agreeably to Scripture, they hold to be neceffary, in order to an actual believing on the name of the Son of God, so as to be justified by his blood, and faved from wrath through him?

The hinge of the controversy, then, between Palemon and his principal antagonists, is not, whether men ought to renounce all confidence in their own righteousness, and all peculiar claims to the divine favour and mercy, founded upon any thing, in or about themselves, by which they are distinguished from the rest of mankind? for this they readily grant, and teach, with as much plainness and unreserved freedom as he does, or can do: but the question is, how, or in what manner, they are brought to this humbling and self-denying exercise? The worthy preachers above-mentioned, with all found Protestant divines, agreeably to the Scrip-

tures

Here I think it proper to acquaint the reader, that, though I am of opinion that Mr. Flavel, Marshall, Gutbry, Boston, and Erskines, against whom the letter-writer

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tures and the apostolic doctrine, affirm, that it can never be attained without the supernatural influence and operation of the Holy Spirit upon their minds and hearts. Palæmon, on the contrary, afferts with great confidence, that no such thing is necessary.

Whether he or they, therefore, shew the greatest disaffection to the doctrine of the true grace of God preached by the apostles, I presume, may easily be determined.

From some hints in the letter-writer's performance there is reason to think, he was sufficiently apprized, that the eminent divines he so bitterly inveighs against, understood their own doctrine in the sense now explained; but, then, he will tell us, that their interpretation of that doctrine is built upon this false supposition, that every man's pride is not equal to his worth, or that men may have experience of a good work wrought in them, and yet be wholly denied to it, in the matter of justification before God; which he insinuates is simply impossible*.

writer shews a peculiar spite, and others who teach the same scriptural doctrine with them, concerning imputed righteousness and imparted grace, merit that character, I am forry there should be so much reason to exclude from that number feveral modern teachers : who, by leading their hearers to build too much upon inward feelings, impressions, impulses, and a Christ within them, have, I am afraid, gone to an extreme, on the one hand, almost as dangerous as that which Palemon has run into, on the other; and thus given too much ground for those accusations which he has brought. not only against them, but also against many eminent and judicious divines who have been enabled to keep the middle path, which the Scripture directs to, and were peculiarly careful to avoid both the extremea above mentioned. Letters, &c. p. 45.

Perhaps we may have occasion to consider our author's leading maxim, that every man's pride is equal to his worth, more fully afterwards; here we shall only observe, that if it must be owned to be impossible for men to be possessed of any good qualifications, or have any gracious work wrought in them, and yet be entirely denied to it, in the matter of justification; then certainly the apostle Paul gives us a very falle account of his own experience. and exercise; who, after Christ had been formed in him, and, by the grace of God bestowed on him, he had been enabled faithfully to discharge his duty as a minister and apostle of Christ, yea to labour more abundantly than all the other apostles; and was fufficiently conscious of all this, ascribing it to the grace of God, which made him to differ, and by which he was what he was, and did what he did; tells us, that doubtless he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; and that he might be found in him, not having his own righteousness which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. For I think it will not be refused, that these words import his having wholly renounced all confidence in any inherent righteousness; in any good that ever was done by justifying righteousness before God; and that he did so after he was so far conicious of both, as to acknow-Jedge, that the grace of God bestewed on him was not in vaint. Yet if Polemon's doctrine be true, the apostle, unmindful of his favourite maxim, that every man's pride is equal to his worth, did only impose upon himself and the rest of mankind, by fuch a declaration.

[•] Philip. iii. 8, 9. † 1 Cor. xv. 10.

Further; this notion of the letter-writer does also give the lie to our bleffed Lord himself, who plainly intimates, that it is not impossible for men to do much good, to be faithful, diligent and confant in doing their duty, and yet account themselves unprofitable servants *; which, whatever it may include more, can certainly import no less, than that after they have done all in the manner aforefaid, they may, and must acknowledge, that it cannot be in the least available for their justification before God; or that they have no reason to boast of it, as making them deserving objects of faving grace. Yet doubtless every such person will have good reason to say with the apostle, by the grace of God I am what I am; or, if I may use an expression found in a sermon + delivered by that eminent and truly evangelical preacher Mr. Ralph Erskine, to say thankfully what the Pharifee said boastingly, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men; 'have not been left to perish in a state of fin and milery, or to perfift in abusing my time and talents to thy dishonour, and the destruction of my own foul, as many are, and do; but have by thy grace been enabled, with some degree of fingleness and fincerity, to dedicate myself, and all my fervices, to thy honour, and aim at universal obedience to thy commands; though fill I have great reason to acknowledge, that I am an unprofitable fervant, and that if thou shouldest lay judgment to the line, and equity to the plummet, every thing that ever I did, instead of being available for justifying me, would be enough to condemn me.

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^{*} Luke xvii. 10. † On Pfal. ci. 1. intitled, The Militant's Song.

Such a form of thanksgiving the letter-writer would, no doubt, with a fneer, call Pharifaism to the life; but, with his leave, fo far as I can conceive, it would import neither more or less, than what is contained in the faying of the apostle above-mentioned: By the grace of God I am what I am. The same apostle elsewhere plainly intimates, that though all men are equally corrupt, and destitute of every good qualification by nature, the grace of God makes all true believers to differ from other men; and is there any reason why they should not, in a way of thankful praise, bear testimony to the reality and efficacy of that grace that has thus made them to differ, and whereby God hath faved them, and called them with a holy calling; called them out of darkness into his marvellous light +? Are not they expressly commarvellous light †? Are not they expressly com-manded so to do? Yet if, in obedience to the call of God I, they effay, and are enabled thus to praise the Lord for his distinguishing goodness - Palamon will tell us they only act the part of the proud Pharifee, gratify a kind of religious pride, and glory over the rest of mankind, as being better, and more high in favour with God than they.

If our Lord tells us, that he who breaketh one of the least of the divine commands, and teaches men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven ; what shall we think of Palæmon, who teaches downright rebellion against the Lord; and, which is yet more daring and dreadful, reproaches and blasphemes the whole work of his Holy Spirit in the regeneration, conversion, and sactification of believers? As his lies and blasphemies, in rese-

¹ Cor. xv. 10. † 1 Cor. iv. 7. 2 Tim. i. 9. † Pfal. cvii 1, 2: 1 Peterii. 9. | Matt. v. 19.

rence to this matter, may remind one of the awful reproof the apostle Peter gave to Ananias, for a crime that appears to have been of a far less impious nature; on this occasion, I can hardly forbear adopting the words of that apostle to him, as being with a little variation too applicable in the present case; Why hath Satan filled thine heart

to lie against the Holy Ghost *?

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Before I conclude what reflections have occurred on this head, I shall only take occasion to observe, that if it can be said, that Palæmon, whose letters appear to be only a collection of some of the most incoherent, wild, extravagant and felfcontradictory imaginations, that are any where to. be met with, has any leading fentiment, it is the following; namely, that the divine righteoulness, or the work finished by Christ upon the cross, is fo all-sufficient for the justification and salvation. of the most guilty, as to supersede all necessity of any inward and fupernatural work of the divine Spirit upon the minds and hearts of men, in order to convince them of their fin and mifery by nature; to discover the absolute necessity, perfection and excellency of the righteoufness of Christ, and determine and enable them to believe the report of the gospel concerning it, that they may enjoy the benefit and comfort of it; or to implant . in their fouls a principle of grace, holiness and new obedience, that they may be fitted for the fervice . of God here, and the possession of glory hereafter.

Wherefore I cannot but wonder, that a certain judicious writer +, who hath fuccinctly, and, I am

^{*} Acts v. 3. † Mr. T. U. author of The Scripture Account of justifying faith, considered in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Samuel Pike.

persuaded, to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced reader, answered several of our author's impertinent cavils against what he calls the popular doctrine, and refuted his unfcriptural notions with regard to justifying faith, should have so far mistaken him, as to imagine it is his leading sentiment, that sinners are freely justified by the righteousness of Christ without respect to any thing in them or about them, as a qualification for that purpole*. This, I own, I take to be not only a precious gofpel-truth, but the grand characteristic of the true apostolic gospel: yet, if I mistake not, Palamon, in his letters on Theren, &c. has done more to darken, corrupt and pervert this fundamental article of the Christian faith, than any writer that has gone before him; though, as he has managed his opposition thereto with so little caution, candor or decency, there is reason to think, his attempts of this kind will be attended with less success, and confequently be less hurtful, than those of some others who have formerly been engaged in the Came unhappy undertaking.

Whatever just and drong things he feems to affert concerning the fovereignty of divine grace. and the imputed righteouinels, as being the only ground of a finner's justification, upon inquiry, it will be found that thus he only endeavours to amule, and impole upon the unwary reader, by an empty found of words without any meaning; or to establish the permicious error above-mentioned, which we call his leading fentiment; and indeed it may be juffly termed the capital characteristic of

his doctrine.

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Script Account, &c. p. s. Meint of fall in a famous confidence in a larger to too r

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But we proceed to examine another article of Palamon's creed: for the more we dig into this well, the greater abominations we may see.

ARTICLE VII.

1 S conviction of sin by the law is no way necessary in order to a believing on Christ for righteousness and falvation, it is idle to affirm, or suppose, that by the law is the knowledge of fin, or that ever the Spirit of God makes use of it as a mean for convincing surners of their guilt and mifery, or of their need of Christ and salvation; for it cannot be of the least advantage to an unbelieving suner in any of these respects: and those who exhort men to search and try their ways, by viewing them in the glass of the divine law, that they may be made sensible of their sin and guilt, of the mifery and danger of their condition, and confequently of their need of mercy and falvation, through Christ revealed and exhibited in the gofpel, do only cut out work for the pride of the devotee, and teach men to establish a righteousness of their own in a new shape, under the deceitful nation of working their way toward that of Christ.

REMARKS.

THAT I have done Paleman no manner of injustice in ascribing to him the sentiments expressed in this complex proposition, will appear from the following passages in his letters on Theron, &c. which I shall here take the liberty to transcribe. This Gentleman, p, 290. is pleased to say, "One "must have seen little of the deceits of the popular fermons, if he has not perceived what large work is cut out for the pride of the devotee,

in the doctrine about convictions of guilt." Again, p. 202. he expresses himself in the following manner: " In the death of Christ, then, is held forth the broadest view of human guilt and mifery, and the clearest discovery of the all-sufficient temedy. There divine judgment itself is made to rest for a light to the nations. There is no occasion then for popular preachers to lead men through their idle process of a law-work, before they will condescend to display the glad tidings before them." And, p. 295. he fcornfully censures Aspasso for exhorting Theron, who as yet appeared in a great measure ignorant of the divine law, of the evil, guilt and demerit of fin, and confequently of the mifery and danger of his own condition, to study the law of God, and examine himself thereby; that he might get more just and affecting views of the infurficency of his own righteousness, and the vanity of his own endeavours to obtain righteousness and falvation by the works of the law. The letterwriter infinuates, that all exercises of this kind, are both unnecessary and unprofitable, and proceed on a false supposition; as if one could reap any spiritual benefit from fludying the divine law, or know how pure, how extensive, how sublimely perfect it is, before he knows Chrift, the end thereof for righteoufness. And, if we may believe our author, to exhort unbelieving finners to any fuch exercise, naturally Terves to administer more delicate food for their pride.

We might also take notice of another extraordinary passage in Palamon's letters, which though it does not only respect conviction of sin, delire of salvation, and a prevailing concern to obtain it, with other dispositions, and exercises of soul, which necessarily accompany a true sense of guilt and misery, but seems intended to pour contempt upon the whole work of the divine Spirit in the conversion of

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a finner, may fitly be allowed a place here. as follows: "We may now proceed to take notice 44 of the capital absurdity of the popular doctrine. "It leads us to read the New Testament back-" wards. It fets before us the several effects or " fruits of faith, or rather certain operations of its " own, under the facred names of these effects; " and then prompts us to work our way to faith, " by first attaining or feeling these effects. " it is that we have fo many treatifes describing to us, the previous steps necessary to be 66 taken, in order to conversion. Long and dreary " indeed is the path which they prescribe to us. " So that, while men continue obsequious hearers " of this doctrine, they may indeed be ever learning, but they shall never be able to come to the " knowledge of the truth. The writers of these " treatises, do in one respect, often resemble the " writers of romances. The latter, when, after various difficulties, they have at length got the hero and his damfel married, have generally lit-" tle more entertainment to give us. The former exhauft their genius, in leading the ferious foul to the wifned-for period of what they call con-" version, and after that they give us little more " than infipid repetition*." In a note at the bottom of the page, he tells us, he must frankly acknowledge, "that he looks upon the first mentioned fort " of writings," viz. those of our most eminent reformed divines, concerning regeneration and converfion, 46 as much more hurtful to mankind," than the idle and lying romances he had been speaking of.

We might quote a number of passages in the letters on Theron, &cc. wrote to the same purpose, and in the same spirit; but these may suffice as a speci-

² Lettes, &c. p. 327.

men of the author's unscriptural and corrupt notions on this head.

Before we proceed to a particular examination of his peculiar tenets and opinions, or rather impious and extravagant fancies, relating to the matter under consideration, it is proper to observe, that here, as his manner is, he artfully, and most deceitfully, mifrepresents the fentiments of those eminent divines whose doctrine about convictions he endeavours to expose. He would have his reader believe, that when they affert the necessity of conviction, &c. they teach, that men must perform fome laborious and painful exercises, before they can have a fufficient warrant to apply Christ and the promifes-to themselves, or to make the appropriation which is declared to be effential to faith; yea, that they must experience such and such a degree of conviction, computation, humiliation, &c. which he profanely calls the idle process of a lowwork, before it can be competent to display the glad tidings of the gospel before them; or that conviction of fin and mifery, and other dispositions and excercifes of foul, that are supposed necessarily to accompany it, must be considered as requires to juftification *, with which a man must be furnished.

The words requifite to, or in order to justification, will admit of different senses. They may either fignify what is some way previous, or subservient to justification; or that which consisters a sinner's justifying righteousness before God, either in whole or in part. There are many things requisite to justification in the former, which are not at all necessary in the latter sense. Thus, in order to justification through the imputed righteousness—it is certainly requisite, that the report of the gospel concerning that righteousness be known and believed; and that the sinner be convinced of the vanity of all other ways and means of relief; or, to speak in

Art. VII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. 143
that he may perceive a manifest difference betwixt
himself and others; such a difference as makes

the dialect of the letter writer, pinched with an impossibility of hope on every other side. All these, and other things of a like nature, are full as necessary in order to a sinner's enjoying the comfort and benefit of the divine righteousness, according to Palæmon's hypothesis, as any of those pre-requisites, he tells us the popular preachers affirm to be necessary in order to justification, or acceptance with God; yet he will not affert, that the former are the ground of justification, or any part of a sinner's justifying righteousness before God; neither do his opponents assign any such place or use to the latter.

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The different vie, and doubtful fignification, of thefe expressions, necessary to, or inorder to acceptance with God. affords the letter writer a copious fund of declamation and raillery against the popular preachers. But if we duly attend to the diffinction above mentioned, we shall esfily perceive, that his pretended reasonings against them, on the point of justification and acceptance with God; are no better than one continued, blundering paralogifm, or a number of wretched fophisms, which have not the least appearance of argument, but what is entirely founded on the ambiguity of a few common words and phrafes that may be understood in a fense every way found and perfectly innocent, even according to his own scheme. And consequently the several charges of deceit, prevarication, disaffection to the true grace of God manifested in the atonement, perverting the apostolic gospel, &c. which he brings against a number of eminent and ufeful preachers in relation to this matter, are only fo many groundless calumnies and malevolent aspersions thrown upon the memory and character of those worthy men : which injury done to their name and reputation, there is ground to fear, he will in due time refent who hath faid, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour : - touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

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all the promises bear a peculiar direction to him, and others surnished with the like requisites; such a difference as may encourage him to consider himself as already a friend of God, and an heir of eternal life, and so affirm what is effential to faith*.

But do those worthy men indeed teach any such thing? Can such conclusions be justly drawn from any thing advanced in their fermons or writings? Far from it. They teach, with the apostle Paul, that the divine law, as a covenant of works, curses and condemns every finner for the least transgreffion of it, or want of conformity to it; and that what things foever the law faith, it faith to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God +. After the same apostle they teach, that by the law is the knowledge of fin 1; that the law is to be preached for awakening careless and secure sinners, and bringing them to a fense of their fin, guilt, misery and danger; and that the Spirit of God ordinarily makes use of it for this purpose, and in doing so works fovereignly; carrying on the work of conviction more gradually in some, and more speedily in others.

They teach, that according to the Scripture, and the very nature of the thing, men must know that they are sinners before they will welcome or believe on the Saviour; must be convinced that all their own righteousness are as silthy rags; and that nothing they ever did, or can do, can be in the least available for their justification before God, or contribute more or less toward their acceptance with him, before they will rest up the lone for justification and salvation. Further; they teach,

Letters, &c. p. 287. † Gal. iii. 10. Rom. iii. 19. I Rom. iii 20.

that men must know they are sick before they will come to the physician; that they must know they are in bondage, before they will prize or welcome the glad tidings of a Redeemer; that they must be convicted of the guilt of rebellion against the Divine Majesty, and see themselves condemned for the crime, before they will accept of a pardon; and, in sine, that they must be convinced they are lost, and do absolutely need salvation, before they will humbly receive it as a gift, and acknowledge themselves to be wholly indebted

to the grace of God for it.

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But did those worthy men ever teach, or -at all infinuate, that men must labour to attain conviction and a fense of fin, or any other preparatives to conversion, as qualifications necessary to recommend them to the divine favour and mercy, or as in any respect intitling them to the benefit of the divine righteousness? Did they ever endeavour to persuade their hearers, or those who might read their writings, that any degree of conviction, contrition, bumiliation, &c. lays a foundation for the appropriating claim of faith, or gives them ground to confider themselves as possessed of something that may embolden them to claim, accept and polfels every, or indeed any heavenly bleffing; or to entertain a better opinion of themselves than they had before? Quite the reverse. Have they not constantly taught and affirmed, that the great defign of that convincing work of the Spirit of God which the Scripture warrants us to confider, as an ordinary preparative to true conversion, is, that a finner, naturally proud and elevated with a vain opinion of his own righteoulness and good qualifications, of one kind or other, may be brought to see that he is deflitute of every qualification, but those of extreme indigence, guilt and unwor-VOL. I.

thiness, and of every recommendation, but that of extreme wretchedness; or that, being thoroughly pinched with the impossibility of hope on every other side, a preparative which the letter-writer himself supposes to be previous to, or necessarily implied in that persuasion of the truth which he calls faith, he may welcome the report of salvationthrough a Redeemer, humbly accept of the gift of righte-ousness brought near to him in the promises and dispensation of the gospel, and bottom his hopes of acceptance with God, and eternal salvation, wholly upon that righteousness, or upon Christ's

work finished upon the cross?

The method which Palemon takes to fix the charge of error, and difaffection to the truth of the gospel, upon the teachers of what he calls the popular doctrine, on this head, is truly amazing. Because they teach, that, in order to a believing and reaping any faving benefit from the gospelrevelation, finners must be fo convinced of their guilt and unworthiness, as to fee that they are deftitute of righteoufness, of every good qualification. and, as to the matter of acceptance with God, perfeely on a level with all their fellow finners, yea with the very worst of mankind; he would have us believe, that, by doing fo, they infinuate, that men must be led through a process of conviction, in order to attain some consciousness of their own excellency, or fome good qualifications about themfelves, on which they may found fome special and diffinguishing claim to the divine mercy; or, which is all one, that they must become conscious of some personal worth, by being convinced that they are destitute of every thing that can be so called. This, methinks, is as abfurd as it would be to funpofe, that one must know himself to be rich and happy, by that which can only discover his ped

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verty and misery; or that one must see himself to be a deserving object of saving grace, by that which makes it evident that he is altogether unworthy of it.

The letter-writer charges his opponents with cutting out large work for the pride of the devotee; by their doctrine about convictions of guilt; but the eye must be strangely tinged, that can see any ground for such an accusation in what they teach in-relation to this subject. When they teach, that men must be so convinced of their guilt and misery, as to be perfuaded, that whatever they have done or can do, in obedience to the divine law, or in conformity to any rules or directions whatfoever concerning the exercise of piety, is so far from being of any avail for their justification before God. or laying a foundation for any peculiar claim to his favour, that it is only a further provocation of his anger and displeasure against them; while they continue in unbelief, and refuse to accept of the gift of righteousness and salvation freely offered in the gospel to the most guilty and unworthy; I am perfuaded every one but the fagacious Palæmon, and Gentlemen of the same extraordinary penetration with himself, will readily acknowledge, that their doctrine, if rightly explained and understood, instead of cutting out large work, cuts out no work for the pride of the devotee; and leaves no room for any boafting in the creature, or any fuch felf-pleafing imagination, as, that the person who is supposed to be the subject of the convincing work they freak of, has by his convictions, by any pains he has taken, or any endeavours of his own, acquired fuch a diffinction above the careless and profane, as may go far to counterbalance all the guilt he comes in this way to be fenfi-00 H 2

148 PALÆMON'S CREED Art. VII. ble of*. He must be a very great stranger to the writings and discourses of those eminent preachers. who has not observed, that the chief scope of their doctrine about convictions, is, to overthrow all proud reasonings, and self elating imaginations of this kind, and to persuade men, that they neither have, nor can acquire any other qualifications, to recommend them to the mercy of God in Christ,

but fin, guilt, and mifery.

If any, when treating of convictions, and other preparatives to conversion, have been so injudicious as to infinuate, that the call of the gospel belongs only to awakened and fenfible finners; or have inadvertently dropt any thing, in their fermons or writings, that favours this opinion, or that can justly be thought to import, that finners must attain to fuch and fuch a degree of conviction, compunction, humiliation, &c. before ministers of the gospel can be sufficiently warranted to display the glad tidings before them, or call them to believe on Christ for righteousness and salvation; I have no intention to windicate them; as I am fatisfied that, by doing fo, they have exceeded the bounds of their commission; of that commission which our Lord Jelus Christ gave to his apostles, and their fucceffors in the work of the ministry to the end of the world, Go - preach the gofpel to EVERY CREA-TURE +; which, I think, must necessarily imply, that Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, having every thing in him necessary to the justification, fanctification and complete falvation of every finner of mankind, is, and ought to be, exhibited in the difpensation of the gospel to all forts of finners without exception, and they called prefently to believe

Letters, p. 290. † Mark xvi, 15.

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on him, as made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. And I am far from denying, nor do I suppose it was ever questioned by the teachers of what Palæmon calls the popular doctrine, that the divine grace which is communicated, and operates in and by this word of the gospel for the conversion of sunners, often prevents the most hardened rebels and obstinate sinners, by giving them a sight of their sin and sinfulness, misery and danger, and determining them to believe on a crucified Saviour; though before they were altogether ignorant of him, and of their perishing condition without him.

If this is all that the letter-writer means, when he fays, that the divine grace reigns among the infentible and the dead, through righteousness, unto eternal life †, I can readily agree with him. But if he supposes, as he must do in many places of his book, if his words have any meaning, that sinners may be wholly insensible of their sin and misery, and of their need of Christ and salvation; or wholly under the power of spiritual blindness, stupidity and hardness of heart; and yet, while continuing so, believe on Christ for salvation, and enjoy the benefit of the divine righteousness; it is such an extravagant imagination, that one may justly wonder how it could enter into the mind of any thinking man.

This is in effect to suppose, that a finner may believe on Christ for salvation who never had salvation in his view, nor knows that it is in the least necessary, or attainable by Jesus Christ; or that one may wholly renounce his own righteousness who never saw himself to be guilty. In short, it is no less about than it would be to imagine, that one

^{* 1} Cor. i, 30. + Letters, p. 291.

who was never convicted of any crime, yea never viewed himself in any other light than that of an honest and obedient subject, who rather merits a reward; or that one will thankfully accept of a cure from a physician who never was, nor is at all sen-

fible of any malady.

Either of these suppositions, one would think, is entirely repugnant to common sense; yet we may find the author of the letters on Theren, &c. frequently obtruding absurdities of this kind upon his unwary reader, under the plausible name of the ancient apostolic gospel. And, indeed, the invidious accusations which he has thought fit to bring against his opponents, for what they teach about convictions of guilt, and other things of a like nature, have scarce any other soundation to support them, but some such wild and self-contradictory imaginations as those just now mentioned.

This Gentleman is pleafed to tell us, "that if two men are led to execution for the fame crime, the one overwhelmed in forrow, and the other elevated to noify mirth by firong drink, we just by recken the condition of the latter to be fully as miferable as the former; and if mercy refered pechs mere mifery, wretchedness, and unworthiness, it will certainly as readily regard the infentible person as him who has the quickest feeling of what is before him; otherwise it beson haved to regard the one as more worthy than his fellow; which would be inconsistent with the nature of mercy, at least that of divine mercy; for wherever the least degree of worth appears, there the province of mercy ceases, and that of justice and equity takes place."

We could wish this author had told us what he intended by faying, that mercy will as readily regard the infensible person as him who has the quickest feeling of what is before him. Does he mean, that mercy published, proclaimed, and offered to all in fuch circumstances as both these criminals are supposed to be in, is what they are equally warranted to take the benefit of? or that there is nothing about the infensible person more than the other, to hinder the egress and operation of the divine grace for his conversion and falvation ? Both are granted : and if he had read the writings of his antagonists with candour and the least degree of attention, he might have known, that neither was ever denied by them. But if he means that the infensible perfon, while he remains fuels, and has not the leaft apprehention of his milery and danger, will as reacome, and embrace offers of pardon and nercy tendered to him, as he who has the quickett teling of both, I am perfuaded, few who have the aft degree of common understanding, will agree with him in this. Yet I know no reason he has to inveigh, with fo much warmth, against the popular preachers for what they affirm in relation to this point, if it is not, that they could never be prevailed upon, so far to contradict the Scriptures. and divest themselves of common understanding. as to adopt fach a whimfical and fenfelels opinion a which I think no lober man will ever attempt to maintain. How far one who has got his zeal against the purity of the gospel, and the power of godliness, wrought up to a degree of distraction, by the intoxicating fumes of error, envy and malice, may impose upon himself, and endeavour to impose upon others, by fuch extravagant fancies, I shall not take upon me to determine.

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Polamon might have spared his invectives against the popular preachers: for the strange notions of the divine mercy and sovereignty which he has vented, and endeavours to establish, in the remarkable passage above-quoted, will afford him a copious fund of raillery, which may be used with no less advantage against many plain texts of Scripture, than against what he calls the popular doctrine concerning a conviction of guilt and misery, as being either supposed, or necessarily implied in the very

notion of justifying faith.

When God threatens to punish unbelieving, obflinate and rebellious finners who have rejected all the offers of grace and falvation made to them in the gospel, without pity or mercy, Prov. i. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, one might with Palæmon argue in this manner : The condition of these hardened and impenitent finners, who have wickedly rejected all the calls and offers of grace that ever the Lord was pleased to privilege them with, may justly be reckoned fully as miferable as that of those who have been enabled to obey the call of God in his word; and if mercy respects mere misery, wretchedness and unworthiness, it will as certainly, and as readily regard the former as the latter; otherwife it must regard these as more worthy than those; which would be inconfiftent with the nature of mercy, at least that of divine mercy. Thus, according to the letter-writer, when God declares, that he will thew no favour to those unbelieving and impenitent finners above-mentioned, he in effect denies the fovereignty of his own mercy; absit blasphemia

Persons of the same cavilling humour with Palamen, might take occasion to form an argument of the same nature, from the awful woes which our

Far be the blasphemy.

Lord denounced against the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not; Matt. xi. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. and from a multitude of other passages of a like nature both in the Old and New Testament. But what God said to Job, on a very different occasion, I think, would be a sufficient reply to all impious cavils of this kind: Shall be that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let

bim answer it, Job. xl. 2.

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Palamon is pleased to tell us, that the world of mankind-finners, to whom the glad tidings of falvation are published, even when enlightened with learning and wildom, bleffed with peace, and adorned with all that piety and holiness that can be supposed to take place among those who are unacquainted with the truth of the gospel, or faith in Christ, is sometimes in Scripture represented under the notion of a great infirmary of fick, maimed and bruised; and sometimes under that of a vast and darkfome dungeon, filled with criminals in chains, ready for execution, &c.* Whence I fuppose he would have us conclude, that all mankind, while in an unrenewed state, and destitute of faith in Christ, however they may be distinguished from one another by fuch qualifications as are amiable in the fight of men, are yet equally miserable and unworthy of the divine favour; and, confequently, that they have all an equal right to take the benefit of the divine righteousness brought near, and of that proclamation of mercy that is made to finners, in the gospel. Who denies it? If he is not wilfully ignorant, he must certainly know, that the celebrated preachers, whose memory be uses his utmost endeavours to defame, never did; but, when-

to any and a state of the same of

[•] Letters, p. 291.

ever they had occasion, afferted all this, and reprefented the universal corruption of human nature with the great misery of all mankind, previous to union with Christ, in a far stronger light, and to far better purpose, than ever he was able to do. Is not that very doctrine about convictions of guilt, which he so strenuously opposes, and scornfully derides, sounded upon a supposition of the truth of

those things?

Can any thing be more foolish and impertinent, than for this writer to attempt the overthrow of their doctrine on this head, by proving that to be true, which they were fo far from denying, that all that they teach, in relation to this matter, is indeed built upon a supposition of the truth of it? For, as we formerly had occasion to observe, the whole scope of their doctrine about conviction, and every other preparative to conversion, is to teach men, that before they can actually enjoy the bene-At of the divine righteoufness, or believe on the name of the Son of God, they must be thoroughly convinced that there is nothing done by them, nothing in or about them, which can in the least recommend them to the favour of God, or afford them any better warrant to claim the benefit of that justifying righteoutness which is revealed in the sofpel from faith to faith, than the vilest and most wretched finners who hear the gospel must certainly have, in consequence of that gracious call, to believe on the name of Christ, which is equally directed to all belonging to the loft race of Adam who hear ic without any refleiction, limitation or exeeption whatfoever.

But perhaps the letter-writer will tell us, he judges of the tendency of their doctrine, in regard to this point, by the effects which it has upon many of their hearers and admirers, who evidently improve

Art. VII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED.

prove it for gratifying a kind of religious pride. And doubtless he will be ready to alledge his own experience in confirmation of this: for he tells us, that for a considerable time he endeavoured to form his heart upon the model of doctrine recommend-

ed in their practical treatifes".

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Here, to do him justice, we will allow, that he, and others not a few, may have understood their doctrine about convictions, &c. in such a sense as to imagine, that it affords such delicate food for religious pride as he speaks of +. Yea further, we will grant, that every unhumbled and unrenewed finner is very apt to understand it in this sense; not being able to conceive how the use of those means of divine appointment whereby God ordinarily communicates his grace to men; how the performance of any religious duty, or any operation of the divine grace upon the heart, can be of any advantage, further than as they tend fome way to recommend a finner to the divine mercy, or make either the whole, or a part of his justifying righteoutness before God. Thus by a curled dexterity natural to all mankind, they extract food for their pride, and poison to their fouls, out of the most wholfome truths they can either read or hear. But are found doctrine and the teachers thereof to be censured and condemned, because finful men, under the power of spiritual blindness and enmity against the grace of God, do thus wretchedly mistake the nature of the former, and misimprove the instructions of the latter? Surely not.

Those odoriferous flowers that afford the laborious bee wholsome food, and the most delicious honey, are not a whit the worse, that the venomous wasp can extract nothing from thence but poison:

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Letters, p. 86, 87. + Letters, p. 295.

156 PALÆMON'S CREED Art. VIL

for this is not owing to any noxious quality in them, but to a certain malignity in the nature of the creature that feeds upon them. That the law of God, or the feveral precepts and exhortations to duty contained in the Scriptures, have been thus abused, we are very certain; and that the gospel itself, though the most glorious revelation that ever God made of himself, his infinite goodness and sovereignty, to the children of men, is liable to the same abuse, the apostle plainly intimates, when he tells us of some who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness. But shall we, therefore, say that the Spirit of God, speaking in the Scriptures, cuts out large work for the pride of the devotee, &c. — Cursed be the blasphemy.

Palamon blames the celebrated author of Theron. and Alpalio + for supposing, that a painful sense of guilt, mifery, and extreme wretchedness, with an earnest desire to obtain an interest in Christ and his righteousness, are favourable symptoms in the case of a finner who had formerly been elevated with a vain opinion of his own righteoulnels, as being lufficient to recommend him to God, and merit everlasting happiness. Aspasio having intimated to Theron, now convinced of his fin and mifery, and defpairing of salvation by the works of the law, "that be looked upon the relation he had given him of his case, with the same secret joy, as a compassioa nate phylician observes some favourable symptoms, in the critis of a beloved patient's diftemes per;" and added some other words to the same purpose; Palemon is pleased to say, with a sneer, " he could not forbear withing, that Afpafio had ra-" ther rebuked Theron's folicitude, as an attempt to eftablish his own righteousness, in a new shape, under

Jude, ver. 4. † Letters, p. 298, 299.

"the deceitful notion of working his way toward that of Christ*." Elsewhere he speaks in the solution of more difference betwixt a careless and convicted finner, than is betwixt a felon ranging his round at large, and one newly apprehended by the officers of justice: and for my part, I think it would look liker an impertinent sarcasm than any thing else, to tell either of these last, that he was now in a

" very hopeful way t."

This observation we acknowledge would be very just, if there was no possibility of escaping the deferved punishment; or if there had never been any intimation of mercy made to the persons in such miserable circumstances. But if we suppose, as the case really is, that a free pardon is offered to both in the King's name, I think it may fafely be affirmed, that the convicted criminal, who knows he deferves death; fees it in all its horrors before him. and is convinced that there is no possibility of escaping it, but by a grand pardon in the way of mere mercy; is in a fairer way to accept, and obtain the benefit of it, than the other, who is yet flattering himself with hopes, that he will never stand in need of it; and prefuming, either that he was never guilty of any crime, fo as to need a pardon; or that he is able to elude, and secure himself from the stroke of justice, so that he shall never have any occasion for it. If any should affirm the contrary, I believe there are few who would not account him a fool or a madman; yet affertions of this kind are very ordinary with Palamon.

What has been faid with regard to the inflance just now mentioned, we have still more reason to affirm with respect to the case which it was intended to

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^{*} Letters, p. 298, 299. . . t p. 293.

illustrate; namely, that of a convinced sinner trembling under a sense of guilt and apprehensions of divine wrath, who sees every way of escape, but that by pure mercy, entirely blocked up; as convictions of this kind are frequently effects of the same power and grace that provided the atonement, and the ordinary method by which the Lord brings his people to saving acquaintance with himself, or forward to an actual enjoying of the benefit of that righteousness and grace which are made known and exhibited in the dispensation of the gospel. For proof of this we might adduce a great many passages of Scripture; at present we shall only defire the reader to consult John xvi. 8, 9. Rom. vii. 7.

But, fays the letter writer; "we cannot judge merely from the disquiet produced in any man's mind by a sense of guilt, whether his convictions will land in the saving knowledge of the truth or not; so cannot have the least ground to suggest to him any hopeful symptom in his condition from thence." The antecedent may be granted, but we must deny the consequence, or that the conclusion can be justly drawn from the premises; for I think it will not be refused, that there are many things which may give ground for entertaining a savourable opinion of one's condition, that do not say a soundation for absolute certainty concerning the same.

This Gentleman's Logic andhis Divinity are much alike; the former being ordinarily as repugnant to found reason, as the latter is to the holy Scriptures. According to his method of reasoning, a physician cannot perceive any favourable symptoms in the case of his patient, unless he is absolutely certain of his recovery, which no fallible man can ever be, till

Letters, p. 293,

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the cure is perfected: and, by a parity of reason, Christians cannot have the least ground to entertain a favourable opinion of the spiritual condition of one another, because they cannot judge merely from the external actions performed by any man, or any thing about him that lies open to human obfervation, whether he is a true Christian or a hypocrite: and Palæmon himself grants, " that none " ought to conclude they are Christians on the " fame grounds by which others are bound to love "them as fuch, feeing every man is best acquainted " with the fpring or motive of his own actions"." Now how Christians can love one another as fueb. and yet perceive no favourable fymptoms in their condition giving them some ground to judge charitably of, and even comfort one another as there may be occasion, I think, is not easy to conceive; yet it is granted, that men cannot judge certainly in this ease more than in the other.

But this is far from being the only instance of felf-contradiction to be met with in the writings of this author: for he fays and unfays; frequently denies with the greatest confidence in one place, what . he allows and argues from as an undoubted maxim in another; and, in short, sticks at nothing that feems to afford him the least occasion for throwing an edium on the memory and character of his antagonists. However he may thus impose upon some credulous unthinking people, his loofe manner of writing, glaring difingenuity, and malevolent temper, must certainly expose him to the contempt of every intelligent person, and provoke the indignation of every ferious reader and lover of truth.

As Palamon, when opposing and pretending to refute what he calls the popular doctrine about convictions, plainly infinuates, that the knowledge and fludy of the divine law can be of no manner of advantage to an unbelieving finner, nor be any way fubservient to true conversion, or the exercise of faith in Christ, nor indeed in the least available for bringing him to a fense of his fin and misery, at least not necessary for that purpose; the light of a natural conscience being in his opinion sufficient for bringing to a true and thorough conviction of fin; it may be observed, that thus he, in effect, charges God with foolishness in publishing his law from Mount Sinai with such awful solemnity; that the secure. and felf-righteous Ifraelites, might be awaked and convinced of their guilt and mifery, and of the abfolute impossibility of obtaining life by their own righteouiness and obedience; and so be led to prize and embrace the promise of the Messiah made to Abraham and the rest of the Patriarchs, and renewed to themselves; and ratified by all those typical ordinances which were instituted as so many figures of him who was to come, and procure that by his obedience and death which guilty men could never acquire any title to by their endeavours and fervices of any kind, namely, pardon of fin, acceptance with God, and everlatting life,

It might be further observed, that our author's doctrine on this head counteracts the design of all the precepts, and threatnings, of the law recorded in Scripture with regard to unbelieving sinners, and flatly contradicts the inspired apostle who affirms, that the law was added because of transgressions; that by the law is the knowledge of fint; that it is of great use for stopping the mouths of the guilty, convicting them of their misery and danger, and overthrowing all the soolish pleas which they are

^{*} Gal. iii. 19. † Rom. iii. 20.

Art. VII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. 161 ready to offer in their own desence*; and, in fine, that it is our school-master to bring us unto Christ +.

What the letter-writer has advanced in relation to this subject, has also a tendency to fix a charge of folly upon our bleffed Lord himfelf, who began his public ministry by explaining, and shewing the spirituality and vast extent of the divine law, which had been greatly obscured and corrupted by the glosses which the Scribes and Pharifees had put upon it, tending to harden men in fin and fecurity, and confequently in their unbelief and opposition to the gospel of Christ. And, upon the matter, he charges our bleffed Saviour with having acted imprudently, when he called finners to repentance, and warned them of their danger, if they should still go on in their trespasses; and when he exhorted those who were yet destitute of true faith to labour, not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man would give unto them 1. And by afferting, that there is no need of any special agency of the Holy Spirit for convincing men of fin, and that the dictates of a natural conscience are every way sufficient for that purpose, he contradicts the testimony of our Lord in express terms. The Lord Jesus declares, that the Holy Ghost should convince the world of fin | ; no says, Palemon, finners have no need of him, for any fuch end or purpole: " -Afk them, is it true that they have inned or not? If it stand true in their consci-" ence, that they have; this is conviction. If they " have finned, this is enough to damn them, what-" ever fense they have of their sin. And this is " preparation enough for mercy §."

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Rom. iii. 19. + Gal. iii. 24. † John vi. 27.

If would quite exhauft the reader's patience, should we attempt to lay open all the absurdities and abominations that lie concealed in this part of the pretended apostolic gospel; yet, before we quit this head, we cannot help observing, that what the letter-writeralledges in opposition to the doctrine of the popular preachers on this subject, is every whit as inconsistent with his own scheme. Does not he still suppose, that men must be convinced, that they are poor, indigent and guilty finners; that they are fo in reality, and nothing elfe; that they have no amiable qualifications about them to abate the force of this charge ; yea, that they must be pinched with the impossibility of hope on every other side, before they will admit the faving truth, before they can enjoy the benefit of the divine righteouthels ?: At what do his opponents fay more? They conflictly seach, that a finner must be convinced, that he never did, and never can do any thing to avest the wrath of God due to him for his; and that there is nothing in him, or about him, that can recom-mend him to the divide favour, before he will believe, or even for much he understand the true impore of the glad tidings of falvation through Jesus Christ; And does not he himself grant, that such a convic-tion is necessary, when he supposes that men must be thoroughly pinched with an impossibility of hope on every other fide, before they can admit the faving truth, or allow it its due place in their conficiences, to as to reap any faving benefit thereby??

Might not this Gentleman then turn his artillery, which he discharges with so much fury against the popular preachers for their doctrine about the necessity of conviction, against himself and his own

[&]quot; Letters, p. 402-410, &c. ... mill is

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scheme? I own, indeed, there is this difference between him and them, that they, agreeably to the Scriptures, maintain the necessity of a supernatural work of the divine Spirit, for bringing men to fuch a thorough conviction of fin and milery, as both he and they suppose necessary to a believing in Christ for falvation, fo as to rest their hopes of acceptance with God wholly upon his righteoufness; while he in direct opposition to the Scriptures, denies that any fuch thing is necessary. They cannot conceive how a man can be brought to fuch a thorough conviction of his guilt and mifery, or have fuch a pinching fense thereof-without the least concern about salvation. He on the contrary feems to infinuate, that there may be fuch convictions as he speaks of, without any concern of that kind; for the former he allows to be necessary, but denies, that the latter is, or can be fo; that is, he admits, that a man must be pinched with the absolute impossibility of hope on every other side, before he will believe, or have any relish for the truth of the golpel, and yet appears to infinuate, that no mail falvation, or his leternal date, before he believes. This, one would think, is as abfurd as it would be to affirm, that there may be the highest degree of concern without the least degree of solicitude. But it feems many things must be despensed with in fuch a writer as Palemon, that would be fufficient to prove every other man to be, at least for the time, divested of common understanding.

I shall conclude my reflections on this head, with laying before the reader the sentiments of two celebrated writers, concerning the subject now under consideration; which deserve the more notice, as one of them was an eminent reformer, and zealous desender of the doctrine of imputed righteous-

164 PALEMON'S CREED Art. VII. ness; and the other a sashionable divine, and true disciple of Pelagius, and therefore too much of a Gentleman to be indebted, either to a borrowed righteousness for justification, or to divine and supernatural influence for conversion and sanctification.

The first of these is the famous Martin Luther, whom I suppose few will charge with attributing too much to human works and endeavours, in the matter of acceptance with God, or with maintaining any opinions inconfiftent with that fundamental article of the Christian doctrine, respecting free justification through imputed righteousness, which, as we formerly observed, may justly be called the grand characteriffic of the apostolic pospel. That great divine, when treating of the use of the law, and its subserviency to the doctrine of free grace, and the exercise of faith in Christ, has the following words, as they are rendered in an old English translation of his Commentary on the epifle to the Galatians, fol. 152. " Another we of the law is divine and spiritual, which is (as Paul " faith) to increase transgressions: that is to fay, to reveal unto a man his fin, his blindness his mifery, his impiety, ignorance, hatred, and contempt of God, death, hell, the judgment and " deserved wrath of God. Of this use the apostle " intreateth notably in the 7th to the Romans. This is altogether unknown to hypocrites—and to all " that walk in the opinion of the righteourness of the law, or of their own righteoufness. But to the end that God might bridle and beat down this monfter, and this mad beaft (I mean the prefumpst tion of man's righteousness and religion) which se naturally maketh, men proud, and puffeth them " up in such fort, that they think themselves thereby to please God highly: it behoved him to send " fome Hercules, which might fet upon this monfter cc with with all force and courage to overthrow him, and utterly to destroy him: that is to say, he was constrained to give a law in Mount Sinai with so great majesty, with so terrible a shew, that the whole multitude was astonished, Exed. xix. and xx.

"This, as it is the proper and the principal use " of the law; fo is it very profitable, and also most " necessary. For if any be not a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, and outwardly refrain from fin, as the " Pharifee did who is mentioned in the gospel, he " would swear (because he is possessed with the " devil) that he is righteous, and therefore he con-" ceiveth an opinion of righteousness, and presumeth of his good works and merits. Such a one God cannot otherwise mollify and humble, that he " may acknowledge his mifery and damnation, 66 but by the law. For that is the hammer of " death, the thundering of hell and lightening of 66 God's wrath, that beateth to powder the obstinate and fenseless hypocrites. Therefore this is se the proper and true use of the law, by lightening, by tempest, and the found of the trump (as in "Mount Sinai) to terrify, and by thundering, to beat down and rent in pieces that beaft which is called the opinion of righteoufness. Therefore faith God by Feremiab the prophet: My word is se a bammer, breaking rocks. For as long as the " opinion of righteoufness abideth in man, so long se there abideth also in him incomprehensible pride, er prefumption, fecurity, hatred of God, contempt of his grace and mercy, ignorance of the pro-" miles and of Christ. The preaching of free reof miffion of fens through Christ cannot enter into the heart of such a one, neither can he feel any taste or savour thereof. For that mighty " rock and adamant wall, to wit, the opinion of

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PALÆMON'S CREED Art. VII.

" righteousness, wherewith the heart is environed. "doth relift it." have out violed of the tall

Afterwards, fol. 153. fays the same excellent divine. " Here I admonish all such as fear God, and " especially such as shall become teachers of others hereafter, that they diligently learn out of Paul to understand the true and proper use of the law: " which (I fear) after our time, will be trodden un-"der foot, and utterly abolished by the enemies of " the truth." Speaking of some who, like Palamen, pretended great zeal for the honour of God and purity of the gospel, says the same author, "They brag and they fwear, that they feek no-" thing elfe but the glory of Christ, and the falvase tion of their brethren; and that they teach the " word of God purely: but in very deed that they corrupt it and wrest it to another sense, so that they make it to found according to their own " imagination. Therefore under the name of " Christ, they teach nothing else but their own

dreams. As all found Protestant divines have ever been of the lame fentiments with Luther in this matter", of the days of the contract of the I peed

deservation at a contradiction from his transferred to Eft alius usus legis divina, & pracipuus, oftendere peccatum, accufare, perterrefacere & damnare omnes bomints in bac corruptione nature. Est enim lex perpetuum Dei judicium, damuantis peccatum in toto genero bumano pate-factum bominibus. — Estque immutabile judicium Dei op-primens æterna ira omnes, qui non liberantur per agnitionum Filis Des.—Est judicium Des in quo borrenda ira Des adversus peccatum oftenditur omnibus temporibus, quod quidem Jemper Sonat & Sentitur in ecclefia, magis quam in velique mundo: sic statim ab initio in Paradiso, & postea in patrum concionibus sonuit von legis arqueus peccatum, & prodicaus peculiani. Acaded amount with the reason is trive.

Art. VII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED:

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I need not tell the reader, that what he teaches in the passages just now quoted, concerning the use and necessity of conviction by the law, contains the

- Eft ministerii in ecclesia, quod instituit Christus, pars necessaria, arguere peccata, ficut Paulus clare inquit: Nunc revelatur ira Dei de cœlo super omnem impietatem. Utendum est autem voce legis moralis, ut vocant, ad banc ministerii partem. Est enim lex illa, æterna & immutabilis sententia Dei, declarans iram Dei adversus peccatum. Etfi enim Deus recipit bominem confugientem ad Christiam, tamen peccasum non approbat. Ideo Paulus inquit : Per legem cognitio peccati; & semper sonuit in ecclesia inde usque ab initio post lapsum, ut Gen. iv. apparet, & deincept. AC PRORSUS PALSA, ABSURDA ET PERNICIOSA AMAGINATIO EST, FINGERE LEGEM NIHIL ESSE, AUT NON PREDICANDAM ESSE. Quia ideo prædicata est per patres, & deinde terribili voce in Sina revelata, & affidue repetita per prophetas, Christum & apoftolos, ut sciamus effe æternam & immutabilem fententiam Dei, declarantem iram adversus peccatum. -Hac omnia sape & multum cogitemus : nam quod dicitur, Spiritus Sanctus arguet mundum, Id fit per werbum declarans iram Dei; & in bujus verbi cognitione Spiritus Sanctus off efficax. P. Melanchthon, in Loc. Theolog. pag. 180, 181. & 427, 426, 427.

Merito Christum vocat (apostolus Paulus) complementum legis, vel sinem: quia nibil prodesset quid exigat Deus a nobis scire, nis sub jugo & onere intolerabili laborantibus & oppressis Christus succurreret. Alibi legem propter transgressiones positam esse docet: nempe, ut homines damnationis sue convictos humiliaret. Porro quia hæc ad Christum quærendum verà & unica est præparatio, quæcunque diversis verbis tradit, probe inter se consentiunt. Calvin. Institut. lib. ii. cap. 7. sect. 2.

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It would be superfluous to observe, that the popular doctrine, as Palamon thinks sit to term it, about conviction, is entirely consonant to what is taught by those removed divines, concerning the use and assessing of conviction by the law, in the pallages above question.

PALEMON'S CREED Art. VII. very substance of what the letter-writer is at so much pains to ridicule and expose under the notion of the popular doctrine about convictions of guilt. Thus all the scurrilous reproaches by which he endeavours to defame the memory, and blacken the character of a few eminent preachers, against whom his zeal is chiefly inflamed; for no other reason that I can see, but; because their writings and discourses have been in an especial manner useful to many serious Christians, who have a just abhorrence of the impious teners and opinions maintained by him and his party; fall equally upon the whole body of Pretestant divines, and on all the Protestant churches; yea on all that I know of who ever held the doctrine of justification through imputed righteoulnels, till our new friends of the pretended apottolic gospel made their

appearance in the world.

The other noted writer, whose judgment I proposed to lay before the reader, is the famous Dr. W. Sherlock; who, in a treatife full of bitter invectives against some of the most pious divines and eminent non-conformifts in the last century, intitled, A difcourse touching the knowledge of Christ, and our union and communion with him, delivers his opinion, in oppolition to what they taught concerning the nature and necessity of a convincing work of the divine Spirit in order to true conversion, in the following words. " If our faith in Christ has reformed our lives, and rectified the temper of our minds,

and made us fincere lovers of God and goodness;

though we are not acquainted with those artificial methods of repentance, have for felt the work-

" ings of the law, nor the amazing terrors of God's

wrath, nor the raging despair of damned foirlts : " and then all on a fudden, as if we

and then all on a fudden, as if we knower to heard any fuch thing before, have had Court of-

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Art. VII. REVIEWED and Examined. 169

"fered, heard his wooings, and made a formal contract, and espousals with Christ, and such like

workings of a heated fancy and religious diffrac-

"tion; though our conversation be not changed with so much art and method, we are never the

worse Christians for the want of it." In another place the same author speaks in this manner:

"According to these principles there is no cer-

" tain way to get into Christ: the method pre-

" feribed is conviction, compunction, bumiliation and

" faith, which is the uniting grace. Now I observe,

that a man is passive in all this, and can contri-

" bute nothing to it himself, any otherwise than as

" he is acted by an irrefiftible power; and it is a vain thing to give such tules and directions as no

" man can follow."

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This writer has a great deal more to the same purpole in the treatile formerly mentioned, wherein he endeavours to overthrow the peculiar doctrines. of Christianity by the same artifices, and frequently by the very same arguments which Palæmon makes use of to expose and render odious and ridiculous what he calls the popular doctrine concerning conviction, conversion, faith, union with Christ, &c. And in the reply given by that learned and ingenious Gentleman Mr. Polbill, to the invidious reflections of that author against the doctrine taught by the eminent divines above-mentioned , the reader may find a sufficient answer to most of those impertinent and malicious cavils, whereby the letter-writer has endeavoured to subvert some important truths of the gospel taught and inculcated by those whom he is pleased to call the popular preachers.

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locks describing the knowledge of Christ, and our union and communion with him.

Here we shall only observe, that, by comparing what is advanced by that philosophical divine just now mentioned, in opposition to the truth of the gospel, with some noted passages in the extraordinary letters on Theron, &c. it will evidently appear, that men may profess an uncommon regard for the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and yet be influenced by the same spirit of error, implety and disaffection to the truth and power of godliness, that has powerfully operated in some who have done their utmost to undermine and overthrow it. It signifies little what notions men espouse, or what different shapes they may transform themselves into, if they still continue under the power of fin, and reigning enmity against the life and practice of godliness. And we have too often occasion to observe, that this may work as strongly under a mask of love to the imputed righteousness, and zeal for the honour of the divine fovereignty, as under a pretext of zeal for the interests of morality, and honour of the divine law, by which many writers have endeavoured to conceal a rooted disaffection to the truth and purity of the gospel, and the power of godlines.

The author of the letters on Theron and Appalio, not latisfied with pouring contempt upon the whole work of the Holy Ghost in conviction and conversion, has also endeavoured to loose the obligation of the divine law with regard to every unbelieving sinner, and to persuade men, supposed yet to be in a natural state, that they ought never so much as to attempt, or be in the least solicitous about yielding obedience to any divine command, as will appear from the following article of that new doctrine which he has

thought fit to publish to the world.

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Obelieving sinners ought never to attempt yielding obedience to the divine law; and to exhort them to the exercise of faith, repentance, prayer, and the diligent use of the outward means by which God ordinarily communicates his grace to the children of men for their conviction, conversion and salvation, is only to administer food for their pride, and teach them to do, or acquire something, on which they may found some peculiar claim, to the favour of God and the benefit of the divine righteousness, or which may furnish them with a ground of glorying before God over other men.

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HAT these are indeed our author's sentiments, I presume, will be readily granted by all who have perused the letters on Theron and Asposito with any tolerable degree of attention. A great part of his reasoning against those preachers, whom he shews such a strong inclination to defame, is evidently founded upon them: and if it can be made appear, that they are really falle; or that' men in an unrenewed state are under any obligation to believe in Christ, repent and diligently use the means of divine appointment by which God ordinarily conveys his grace into the hearts of his chosen people; it must be owned, that a great part of his book is filled with nothing but impertinent cavils, impudent and malicious calumnies, or idle and unmeaning jargon: A see a selection of to mee

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This Gentleman indeed would have us believe, that those eminent preachers, who are the chief objects of his refentment, by exhorting their hearers to believe on the name of the Son of God, and come to him that they might have life, or to wait upon God in the ordinances of his own appointment, and a diligent use of means of grace, taught them to do fomething as necessary in order to their acceptance with God, and as part of their justifying righteousness; or, at least, as what would furnish them with some peculiar claim to the favour of God and the benefit of the divine righteousness. Accordingly, p. 24. of his letters, after taking notice of a paffage in that excellent abridgment of Christian doctrine, commonly called the Affembly's Catechifm, which, with a degree of prefumption not to be met with in ordinary writers, he censures as affording no small encouragement to spiritual pride, says this Gentleman, with a fneer, " Thus far I am disposed to aoree with their public frandards for once, that I s frankly acknowledge, that their fermons are, by st far, better adapted to the purpole of fetting the minds of people in motion to do fomething to-" ward their peace with God, than the writings of the apostles, which in this respect must appear exet tremely infipid. Accordingly, I find our most popular preachers, after they have given various motives and directions for firetching forth the swithered hand, commonly enforcing them with sthis earnest and prefling call, Up therefore, and be " And, p. 41. he very plainly infinuates, that unbelieving finners are fo far from being under any obligation to believe in Christ, repent of their fins, read and hear the word of God, or perform any religious duty, that all attempts to do fo, are not only needles, but hurtful and dangerous. " A greater or part of the reasoners," says he, " about accepce tance

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Art. VIII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED.

tance with God, have generally made the quef-"tion to run thus, How are we to be exercised,

" and under what influence, prompting or fecond-"ing? What shall we do, or endeavour? What

" thall we feel ? Or, What doth God require of us,

" that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us

" for fin? Whereas the first question ought to " be, Can any doing, feeling, endeavouring, any

" exercise of the soul, either prompted or seconded,

" be of any avail to us in this matter?"

Many passages of the same nature might be quoted from the letters on Theron, &c. but these being fufficient to discover the author's real sentiments on this fubject, at prefent we shall not trouble the rea-

der with any more of them.

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It is easy to perceive, that the whole of Palæmon's reasoning on this head is built upon two suppositions, both of which are manifestly false, and one of them highly injurious to the character of his opponents; while the other is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture. First, he supposes, that those whom he flyles the popular preachers, and all others who affirm, that it is the duty of unregenerate finners to believe and repent, or even to read and hear the word of God, attend the ordinances of divine appointment, use the means of grace, whereby God ordinarily brings men to the knowledge of the truth, and pray for the Holy Spirit to make them effectual. for their conversion and falvation, teach them to do fomething, or acquire some qualification, that may give them a diftinguishing right, or a right above other men, to the favour of God and bleffings of the gospel, and on which they may and ought, more or less, to rest their hopes of acceptance with God. This he not only takes for granted, but frequently afferts with great confidence; though it is evident, that nothing can be more falle, or injurious to the

174 PALÆMON'S CREED Art. VIN.

characters of those worthy men whose doctrine he has thought fit to attack. Do they not every where affert, in the ftrongest terms, that the righteousness of Christ is the only ground of a sinner's justification, and that nothing done by finful men, or wrought in them; no qualifications of any kind, whether before or after conversion, can, in the least, recommend them to the favour of God, or be any part of their justifying righteousness before him? Do they not constantly affirm, that as to the matter of acceptance with God, not only those who may be supposed to have been most diligent in the performance of religious duties before conversion, but even the greatest faint, must stand upon a level with the greatest finner, being with him equally destitute of every claim to the divine favour, but what is entirely founded on the righteousness of the great Redeemer, exhibited, and brought near to finners in the dispenfation of the gospel? Do not those eminent teachers, against whom our author's zeal is chiefly inflamed, with one consent declare it to be a fundamental article of the Christian doctrine, and of their faith, that all human works, duties, exercifes, endeavours, experiences, or attainments of any kind, must be for ever excluded from having any place in the matter of justification before God? Do they not always teach, that it is effential to true justifying faith to renounce all confidence in those things; in any thing in, or about the believer himself, as what can be of no avail for his justification; yea, further, that the great defign of that convincing and humbling work, and of every other operation of the divine Spirit, that is supposed to be preparatory to true conversion, is to beat down all prefumptuous imaginations of personal merit and excellency of any kind; or, in thort, to bring a finner entirely out of himself to Jesus Christ for life, righteousness and salvation? And, after

Art. VIII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. 175 after all, must they be charged with teaching men to establish a righteousness of their own by acts of

faith, or pious efforts to obtain it?

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Had they been only accused of dropping some expressions now and then, which ignorant and selfrighteous men might be ready to abuse for gratifying a kind of religious pride, and cherishing a vain opinion of their own righteousness; however little ground there is even for such a charge as this, if joined with a modelt endeavour to rectify mistakes, and prevent the misconstruction of words which, however innocently spoken, being less cautiously expressed, might be liable to be misinterpreted, it would no doubt have been excusable. But to strain their words to a fense not only different from, but quite contrary to their true meaning, and most obvious fignification, and charge them with maintaining sentiments entirely repugnant to the whole tenor and scope of their doctrine, as well as to their known and avowed principles, is fuch an inftance of fcandalous difingenuity and malice, as merits the contempt, and must provoke the indignation of every one who has the least regard for truth or common equity.

It is a maxim with the Romanists, that faith is not to be kept with heretics; and it seems to be another with Palæmon, that in dealing with them, any scrupulous adherence to truth and justice may well e-

nough be dispensed with.

Another extravagant supposition, upon which the letter-writer founds a great deal of his reasoning against the popular preachers, is, that antecedent to faith in Christ men are under no obligation by the divine law, or on any account whatever, to believe, repent, or use any mean of divine appointment for obtaining the knowledge of Christ, and an interest in him. I do not indeed remember, that

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176 PALÆMON'S CREED Art. VIII.

he any where directly affirms, that unbelievers are not under the law, or bound to yield obedience to any of the divine commands; yet, if his reasoning is just, or indeed has any manner of sense in it, they cannot be under an obligation to perform any religious duty whatfoever. For he quarrels with the popular preachers, because they exhort their hearers, even those who are supposed to be in a state of unbelief, to perform such and such duties: but certainly none can be juftly blamed for exhorting persons to aim at doing their duty, or what the law of God requires of them. He would feem indeed to grant, that men are under an obligation to obey the divine law, even prior to their knowledge and belief of the truth; while he infinuates, that inflead of giving them directions to use the means of divine appointment for attaining the knowledge of their loft state by nature, and an interest in Christ, it would be more proper to fay in one word, " Be perfect." But as this is spoken ironically, and the letter-writer would have finners addressed in this manner, not merely with a view to convince them of the absolute impossibility of obtaining salvation by the works of the law, or their own doings, but to discourage them from attempting obedience to any divine command, at least from the performance of any religious duty, on any confideration whatfoever; it is plain, that, far from afferting the obligation of the . law with regard to men in every condition and circumffance they can be in, he in effect denies it. and infinuates, that unbelievers ought never to be called to perform, or even fo much as attempt yielding obedience to the law of God.

What our author fays, p. 413. seems to confirm this; for there he tells us, that all the exhortations, commands and institutions of the gospel, are directed to consciences endued with that new instinct

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which is produced by the admiffion of the faving truth; or in other words, to believers and justified persons. If this is admitted, it must at the same time be granted, either that the gospel requires some duties not commanded in the law, or that unbelievers are no way bound to yield obedience to the commands of the law.

Palæmon does not allow the first of these suppofitions; for he plainly hints, that there are no duties recommended in the gospel, that are not also commanded in the law. When he is endeavouring to prove Aspasso chargeable with teaching an absurdity, because he had infinuated, that repentance and faith did not so belong to the law of works which Christ undertook to fulfil, as to make them a necesfary part of that obedience which he bound himself to yield thereto in the room of guilty finners, he expresses himself in the following manner. " Will " not that law which Christ came to fulfil, the law " which requires love to God with all the heart, " condemn all who, by their unbelief, make God a liar; and all who, after their bardness and impe-" nitent heart, treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God? Does not the Spirit of God convince all whom he brings to the knowledge of the truth, of fin, because they believe not on " Christ?' In fine, is there any thing contrary to se the gospel of the glory of the bleffed God, not

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diinct From this passage, if it has any meaning at all, I think, it is manifest, that, according to our author, faith, repentance, and every other duty enjoined in the gospel, are also commanded in the law. And, as I suppose it will be readily granted, that he

[·] Letters, p. 354.

who is under an obligation to obey any one precept of the law, is bound to obey the whole law; and that he who is not bound to obey all the commands of the law, is not under the obligation of any; and the letter-writer has affirmed, that all the exhortations and commands of the gospel are directed to the consciences of the regenerate; it follows, by unavoidable consequence, that unbelievers and unregenerate persons are under no obligation to yield obedience to any one precept of the divine law. And if it is so, I think, it is easy to shew, that they can be chargeable with no sin, and confequently stand in no need of a Saviour: for where

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Thus Palamon, by a few bold strokes, as far as in him lies, overthrows both law and gofpel; yea the whole of divine revelation. I know elsewhere he teaches, that faith is no duty required in the law : but if this is true, what could move him to quarrel with Alpasio for affirming so much, as he supposes him to do ? I confess this is what I can no otherwise account for, but by supposing, that he contradicts himself. And indeed I am apt to think, there was never one, endued with any tolerable degree of common understanding, who run himself into such palpable inconfiftencies, as this writer has done. His superlative pride, and the servour of his zeal against the truth and lovers of it, have so intoxicated him, that frequently he feems to understand neither what he fays nor whereof he affirms : for it is no rare thing to find him in one place fooffing at, cenfuring, and pretending to expose the absurdity of those very notions, which he not only supposes to be true, but builds upon, and reasons from as undoubted maxims in another. In one place, he al-

REVIEWED and EXAMINED. Art. VIII. lows, and argues from it as a certain truth, that the obligation of the divine law is eternal; and the cenfure he passes on Aspasso, in the passage just now quoted, is built upon this supposition, That faith, repentance, and all fuch duties as are in any respect incumbent on men with regard to the gospel-revelation, are also commanded in the law; yet it is evident, that a great part of his reasoning against his antagonists is founded on an hypothesis directly contrary to this; namely, that neither faith, repentance, nor the least activity or solicitude of any kind respecting the gospel of the grace of God, are commanded in the law. And he plainly infinuates, that to endeavour to perfuade men, in an unregenerate state, that they are under any obligation to believe in Christ, repent of their fins, or use any mean of divine appointment for attaining the knowledge of Christ and an interest in him, is no less absurd, than it would be to exhort a man to travel a hundred miles in the hopes of his being persuaded at the journey's end, of his folly in attempting to travel at all. I know not how any can reconcile these two contrary suppositions, either of which the letterwriter admits as an undoubted maxim, when he imagines it makes for his purpole, unless they can prevail with themselves to believe, that contradictions may be true, or that a thing may be, and not be, at one and the fame time.

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The last of the suppositions above-mentioned Palemon seems very fond of, and triumphs in his reasoning thereupon, as sufficient to expose the solly and absurdity of what is taught by the popular preachers, while they maintain, that men ought diligently to use all the means of divine appointment for obtaining just views of their guilty, miserable condition by nature, and an interest in the divine righteousness revealed in the gospel. His words are

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these: "Perhaps it will now be inquired, are "no rules to be observed, no means to be used, "no works to be exerted by the human mind or body, in order to justification?" He should have said, as any way subservient, through the bleffing of God upon his own institutions, to true conversion; for this is really his meaning, otherwise his question is nothing to the purpose. But this Gentleman is remarkable for a peculiar dexterity in concealing, disguising, and leading an inattentive reader off from any just view of the point in controversy between him and his opponents.

Let us now hear what answer he makes to his own question. Says he, " The answer is ready: "Yes, very many. And they may be thus fhortly " fummed up : Be perfect, keep the command-" ments, and thou shalt live. The obligation of " the law is eternal, so can never be loosed. 66 But perhaps another state of the question will be " demanded, and that faith should be more direct-" ly respected therein. Well then, let it stand thus. Ought not a man to be at pains to attain to the oerfusion, that all the pains he takes are good se for nothing, except to enhance his guilt? Here 46 methinks we are landed at downright absurdity. " For who will labour in the hopes of being conse vinced, that all his labour is to no purpole, unes less to his hurt? Who will travel an hundred miles, in the hopes of being persuaded at the jour-" ney's end of his folly in attempting to travel at 45 all? Yet on some such principle we must travel. and that too with much fatigue, and in the midfle of many perplexities, if we will be conducted by the popular doctrines."

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Here our author supposes, that unbelievers ought never to be called to the performance of any religious duty; and that it is foolish for them to attempt it, because nothing they can do can be available for their justification. According to him it is as absurd to imagine, that men in an unregenerate state ought to essay the performance of any duty, as it would be to suppose a man might travel an hundred miles in the hopes of being convinced at last of his folly in attempting to travel at all. If this reasoning should hold, men might easily find a way to elude all the commands and exhortations to duty, that are any where to be found in Scripture, without incurring the guilt of any crime; yea thus they might justify themselves in treating them with the utmost contempt, as what they are under no obligation to obey, nor have the leaft concern with.

God commands the wicked to SEEK bim, while be may be found; to call upon him, while be is near; to forfake their wicked ways, and no longer fuffer themselves to be imposed upon by their own vain and self-deceiving imaginations. Our Lord Jesus calls all the hearers of the gospel, in general, to repent and believe the gospel; to labour, not for the meat which perispeth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life; and to come to him for life; yea to STRIVE to enter in at the strait gate;. The aposse

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16ai. lv. 6, 7.

Mark, i. 15. John vi. 27. 35. 37. Luke xili. 24.

As the gloss put upon this, and some other passages of Scripture, by the letter-writer, p. 413, 414. has no reason, nor has he so much as attempted to advance any reason so support it; so, it is such a manifest perversion of some of the plainest texts to be met with in

PALÆMON'S CREED Art. VIII: 182

Paul told the Athenians, that, now, under the gospel God commandeth ALL MEN every where to repent *. - And were we to take particular notice of all the commands, calls, and exhortations to duty, recorded in the word of God, and directed to all men in general, unbelievers as well as others, with the feveral motives by which they are enforced, and the directions given with regard to the practice thereof; it would be necessary to transcribe a great part both

of the Old and New Testament.

Now, the question is, ought men in an unregenerate flate to pay any regard to those commands and exhortations? No, fays Palæmon; it is a downright abfurdity to suppose, that any unbeliever ought to obey, or be in the least folicitous about yielding obedience to any one of them : for to imagine he ought, is as ridiculous, as it would be to suppose. that one must be at pains to attain to the persuasion. that all the pains he takes are good for nothing, except to enhance his guilt; or that he must labour in the hopes of being convinced, that all his labour is to no purpose, unless to his hurt. This methinks is to teach, downright rebellion against the Lord; to teach and encourage men to throw off all regard to his word, ordinances, and inflitutions; to loofe them from all restraints, that a common knowledge of the divine law, and word of God, may be supposed to lay upon the consciences of men; and attempt to persuade them, that they have no occa-

the Sacred Writings, as deferves no manner of notice. further than what may be implied in a just abborrence of such a palpable abuse of the divine word. What he alledges with regard to some of his antagonists, p. 365, may be truly said of himself; for he tarnishes almost every text he breathes upon. every text he breather upon.

Art. VIII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. fion to take the least thought about the state of their own fouls, and eternal falvation; but may be as profitably employed in gratifying the lufts of the felh, or committing the most horrid crimes, as in reading and hearing the word of God, or in per-

forming any religious exercife.

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I believe every intelligent reader will readily agree with me in affirming, that one who teaches any doctrine that has such a manifest tendency to encourage men in the practice of wickedness and impiety, must certainly be influenced by that wicked fpirit whose known character it is, that he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. None but he who prompted our first parents to despise the divine threatning, could thus teach men to disobey the divine commands. If it is intimated, that he who teaches men to break the least command of God. shall be excluded the kingdom of heaven; what shall we think of one who, in effect, teaches them to break all the divine commands at once? His guilt must certainly be very great; and it is to be feared that, without repentance, his doom will be proportionable.

Yet every one who carefully perules the letters on Theron and Afpafio, will eafily perceive, that almost all the author's affertions and reasonings have a tendency to encourage the neglect and contempt of the divine law, of all divine ordinances and religious duties, except when he teaches men to lay a foundation for the certain hope of the remission of their fins, and eternal falvation, in the way of painful defire and fear, or by repeated acts of charity and felf-denied obedience: which is as inconfiftent with what would feem to be the other leading part of his scheme, as the whole is with the Scriptures

or the true apostolic gospel.

It is probable Palemon will urge, that fince it is taken for granted, that, previous to faith in Christ. men can perform no good works, nor do any thing that is well-pleasing or acceptable to God; and that divine grace still acts fovereignly, without regarding any personal merit, or any good qualifications in the objects thereof; it must be extremely abfurd to exhort men to perform duties, or use means of any kind, with a view to the falvation of their fouls, till they believe, and receive that new instinct, which he tells us, is produced by the faving truth admitted into the conscience. But this Gentleman ought to confider, that the question here is not. What men can do ? but, what they ought to do? It is not, what improvement they actually make of the means of grace, or the directions and exhortations he speaks of, while they remain under the dominion of fin, and the power of fpiritual pride? but, what improvement they ought to make of them? If it is their duty to consider their ways, to examine the flate of their fouls, to believe the testimomy of God, his record concerning his Son, revealed in the gospel; read and hear the word; pray over it, and meditate upon it; and use every other mean of divine appointment for bringing men to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jefus; this is fufficient to justify ministers of the gospel in calling and exhorting men to thele leveral exercises, and enforcing the exhortation with all those motives and arguments which the word of God fuggests, as proper to engage the attention, work upon the hope d fear, and every other affection of the rational and if is in the same to the fation

And if it is allowed, as I think it must be, that God requires the several duties above-mentioned of all the hearers of the gospel, they are certainly un-

der an obligation to use their utmost endeavours. and employ all the active powers both of body and mind, towards the performance of them. They cannot, we grant, do any of them acceptably, nor indeed properly fpeaking, do any thing towards the right performance of them, without the special operation of divine grace upon their hearts; and therefore, while under the power of natural corruption, do still fin; yea can do nothing but fin; in all their attempts and endeavours to perform them. But as their inability to yield obedience to the divine commands can never free them from the obligation of the divine law, it is equally certain, that a wilful omiffion of duty is a more heinous fin, than the performance of it, though only in a natural, carnal, and finful manner. And therefore though men may find cause to bewail their performing duties in a finful way, in the way of feeking to establish a righteourness of their own and recommend themfelves to the divine favour, which was never, and will never be required of any of mankind; yet they never have reason to repent of any care, pains, or didigence bestowed, in doing the duties themselves; on to conclude, that the performance of them was needless. Yea we make no seruple to affirm, that the people of God have, on the contrary, often had reason to bless his name, that ever they were excited to use the means of his appointment with some kind of activity and diligence even before their converfion: because though of themselves they could do nothing but abuse their privileges, and enhance their guilt, by any pains they took this way; yet their being kept in the use of appointed means, was, in his infinite wifdom, made subservient to their conversion and falvation.

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This, I think, is sufficient to discover the folly of that mean sophistry by which the letter-writer thinks

thinks he has undeniably proved the absurdity of the popular doctrine, as he terms it, concerning those active operations which it supposes to be necessary, by virtue of the divine command binding upon those who are as yet destitute of faith in Christ, as well as others, and often preparatory to true conversion. The whole of his reasoning on this head is built upon a false supposition of his own; namely, that his opponents, and all who urge a diligent use of the means of grace upon unbelieving sinners, put them upon doing something toward their own justification, or that will make them deserving objects of saving grace; than which there can be nothing more false.

On this supposition, it must be allowed, his method of arguing would be just; because it would certainly be absurd to exhort men to do many things, or any thing, toward acceptance with God, or for intitling them to the benefits of the divine righte-ousness; and yet tell them, that all that ever they did, or can do, with that view, is to no purpose. But can men be warrantably exhorted to perform religious duties, and diligently use the means of grace upon no other consideration than this, that by doing so they are in a fair way of contributing something toward their justification before God; or, at least, that thus they may some way recommend

If Palemon could prove this, he would gain his point. If not, it must be owned, that all he says against orthodox preathers of the gospel, whose doctrine in relation to this point he has thought fit to attack; is groundless, and extremely impersinent. It is enough to keep them in countenance, when they consider, that all the scurrilous reproaches which this Gentleman, in the height of his pride, has been pleased to throw out against them, fall equally

themselves to his favour?

Art. VIII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. 187 equally upon the penmen of Sacred Writ; upon Moses and the prophets, our bleffed Lord, and his inspired apostles. And there is no reason to doubt, but God will seasonably vindicate the honour of his own name — by stopping the mouths of such liars and blasphemers, as endeavour to sully it, by wresting, perverting, and pouring contempt upon his word.

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The substance of what the author of the letters has to object to his principal antagonists, namely, Mr. Boston, Erskines, Guthry, Marshall, &c. respecting the duty of unconverted finners, is, that they exhort them to the diligent use of all the means of divine appointment by which God ordinarily brings his people to the faving knowledge of himself; and encourage them to persevere in such a course, by fuggesting, that it is possible, yea probable, that it may fucceed; or that it may be, and there is some ground to hope, that the Lord will be gracious, and fo far honour his own institutions, as to bless and make them effectual for their conversion and falvation. These and the like exhortations and encouragements, Palæmon often tells us, can have no other tendency than to gratify their pride. Yea according to him it is extremely abfurd to exhort unbelievers to pray, read and hear the word, or perform any other duty, in hopes of reaping any fpiritual benefit thereby. If it is so indeed, then certainly the apostle Peter was in a very great mistake, when he exhorted Simon Magus to repent of his wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of his beart might be forgiven bim, while he was yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. This one text, I apprehend, afforded Mr. Boston a sufficient warrant to address unconverted sinners in

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the following manner. "Do what you can, and it may be while you are doing what you can for yourselves, God will do for you what you cannot. It is probable this course may succeed,

" God is good and merciful, &c. *"

I own, I am not able to see any thing here, or indeed in any of the passages quoted by the letter-writer from the sermons and writings of any of the celebrated preachers afore-mentioned, relating to this subject, that is not evidently imported in the words of the apostle Peter above-cited; if it can be supposed they have any meaning, and that the apostle was not trisling, but dealing sincerely with the spreacher, and manifesting a real concern for the

salvation of his soul, when he spoke them.

Yet the letter-writer will tell us, That every exhortation and direction of this kind, given to men before they are possessed of true justifying faith, imports a plain denial of the divine sovereignty, manifested in communicating grace to men, and is directly contrary to the Scripture, which saith, Not of him that willeth nor of him that ranneth, Social Whom does he thus reproach? Not she popular preachers, but the inspired apostle; yes the Holy Chost, and our blessed Lord himself, by whose authority and inspiration such directions, and similar encouragements, are frequently given to unbelieving finners both in the Old and New Testament.

From what has been already observed, it appears that the scurrilous reflections by which the letter-writer has attempted to throw an odium upon the character of that godly and judicious divine Mr. Walter Marshall 1, are as groundless as invidious. The scope of that author's doctrine, in his excellent

Letters, p. 279. † p. 279. † Letters, p. 430-436.

treatife on fanctification, is not, as Palæmon malevolently infinuates, to reprefs any man's impetuofity to fulfil the law, or teach men to work themselves into a new trate, or out of a state of nature into a state of grace, by their own labour, that they may be qualified for the practice of holines; but to convince the felf-righteous finner of the folly of all his own endeavours while feeking to obtain righteoulness by the works of the law, and of the impossibility of yielding any acceptable obedience to the law of God previous to faith in Christ, and union with him; to teach men, that without faith it is impossible to please God; and, in one word, to inculcate the important truth taught by our Lord Jesus Christ, that the tree must be made good, before the fruit can be good. This great truth, and others necessarily connected with it, Mr Marshall, in the treatile above mentioned, has happily illustrated and improved; and at the same time shewed the necessity. and explained the nature of true evangelical holinefs. with great judgment and perspicuity. And, what is very observable, he has all along not only kept that fundamental article of the Christian doctrine relating to justification through the imputed righteousness, in his eye, but hath set it in as clear and strong a light, as perhaps any uninspired writer ever did + ; being careful, to a degree of accuracy rarely to be met with, that nothing might be advanced by him that had the remotest tendency to corrupt, obfcure, or give a falle view of that important truth a as will appear to every intelligent and unprejudiced reader who peruses his book with any tolerable degree of attention.

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See his Treatife on Sanctification, Direction 6. with

190 PALEMON'S CREED Art. VIII.

It must therefore be something very different from a pure and disinterested zeal for the truth of the gospel, that has induced Palæmon to use such indecent freedoms with the character of that valuable writer, and his performance. Charity thinketh no evil; and love covereth a multitude of sins: but who can stand before envy? especially, when it is accompanied with superlative pride and arrogance; of which we have too many glaring instances in the writings of the author we are now dealing with.

This Gentleman would make us believe, that every doctrine which supposes, that unbelieving finners ought to perform any duty, or use any mean: of divine appointment, for attaining to the knowledge and faith of the truth; or that they ought to be at all folicitous about obtaining an interest in Christ and his justifying righteousness, serves to absure the glory of the divine sovereignty and mercy, which, he fays, "prevents the most hardened " rebels, and brings every requifite along with it "." And in his third, and fifth letters we meet with a great deal of loose reasoning, the plain scope and tendency of which, so far as I can perceive, is to perfuade his readers, that for men troubled with a fense of guilt, or in doubt about their interest in Christ. or their warrant to believe in him for justification and falvation, to attend the ordinances of divine appointment, and essay to wait on the Lord, in the use of appointed means, is so far from being either necesfary or profitable, that it is really hurtful and dangerous; and that all who do fo are in hazard of meeting with a fatal disappointment, like Israel of old who followed after the law of righteousness, but did not attain to the law of righteousness +, And con formation and the season of

Letters, p. 291. † Rom. ix. 31.

according to him the fews, of whom the apostle thus fpeaks, came fhort of enjoying the benefit of the divine righteousness, not because they sought righteousness by, or as it were by the works of the law; but because they yielded external obedience to the law of God, and outwardly observed the divine inflitutions relating to his worship. And hence he. would teach us to conclude, that those who neglect and difregard all means, and opportunities of grace and salvation; treat the word of God and all divine ordinances with the most profane_contempt; give full scope to their lusts, and indulge themselves in the most flagitious practices; are in a fairer way to obtain mercy, and enjoy the benefit of the imputed righteoulnels, than thole who, from a lense of duty, and some particular concern about the falvation of their immortal fouls, are diligent in reading and hearing the word of God, and attending on the ordinances of divine appointment.

Accordingly, the pretended friends of the apoflolic gospel in Scotland are wont to represent and reproach serious people who make conscience of performing the external duties of religion, and attending diligently on divine ordinances, as a number of self-seeking Pharises*; and make no scruple

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It is justly observed by one, "that Palemon has "almost every where egregiously misrepresented the

[&]quot; real character of the Pharifees; - so that if we were " to form our opinion of this sect among the Jews

from the views he is pleased to give us of them, we

would be led to think it was their piety and devotion which was so highly offensive to God; and that accor-

[&]quot; dingly his admirers are become expert in applying

[&]quot; the term Pharifee to every one who cannot adopt his " tenets, or who express any folicitude about the life

[&]quot; and power of real religion in the foul, Scripture as-

192 PALEMON'S CREED Art. VIII. ple to infinuate, that they might be full as profitably employed in drinking, whoring, and perpetrating the

count of justifying faith, considered in a letter to the Rev.

Mr. Samuel Pike, p 43.

The letter-writer with great affurance applies the invidious epithet above mentioned to those whom he flyles the popular preachers; as if their doctrine, temper, and character, did evidently resemble those of the Pharifees. Had he been able to prove that the eminent preachers whom he has thought fit to traduce in this manner, were, like the Pharifees, chargeable with covetoulness, injustice and oppression; that they devoured avidous boufer, taught corrupt doctrine, and offered violence to the law, or word of God, by gloffing away the true spiritual meaning of it; that they taught for dactrines the commandments of men, and made the comandments of God of none effect through their traditions; corrupted the worthip of God, by mixing their own superstitions therewith, and made the house of God a bouse of merchandise, &c. however high their pretentions might have been, and whatever specious appearances of piety and devotion they might have assumed otherwise, I should not attempt to vindicate them. But as the odious classifier he gives of them seems to be wholly founded upon a suspicion of latest paids and hypocrisy in their hearts, of which we man can be sustained a judge or witness, we must beg leave to repel the charge implied thertin, as having no proper evidence to support it. Though we have no inclination to recruminate, we have too much resson to retort the charge: for one there he a more gluing evidence of intolerable pride, and daring presumption, than for a sinful worm to invade the throne of the Most High, and usure the prerogative of the Almighty, by judging the hearts of men, and pretending to explore their most secure views and intentions?

Whatever the Phasises might be in other respects, we are sure there were sew popular preachers among them. They, for the most part, appear to have discovered. whatever specious appearances of piety and devotion

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Art. VIII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. 193 the most enormous crimes, as in reading and hearing the word of God, and attending on his ordinances.

In short, according to this extraordinary doctrine, men in an unconverted state, who would enjoy the benefit of the divine righteousness, instead of attempting the performance of any duty which God requires, or using any mean which he has appointed for bringing sinners to himself, to the saving knowledge of his name and of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, or being solicitous about any thing of that kind, must be careful to neglect and despite every divine ordinance, and to avoid yielding obedience to any divine command; least, by sollowing after the law of rightcousness, with Israel of old, they attain not the law of rightcousness, or lose

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ed as much prejudice and spite against pious men of that character, as Paleston does against some eminent and use-sulpreachers, in his letters on T beron and all affect From the sollowing speech made by some leading mambers of the Jewish Sanhedrim, Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharifees, believed as him? but this people who know not the law are curfed; it would seem, that the doctrine of Christ was the popular dostrine in those times; at least, that it was accounted such by the Pharifees, who were not a little disgusted when they parceived great numbers of the lower fort of people stocking to sermons, and attending the ministrations of our blessed Lord, as they had done formerly those of John the Baptist: yea, they carried the matter so far as to charge our Lord, not only with affecting popularity, but also with a secret design to insurate himself into the affections of the common people by high pretensions to devotion, and extraordinary intercourse and familiarity with God, and by warm declarations against public desections and corruptions, and exposing the faults of the rulers and leading men among them, in such a Vot. I.

PALEMON'S CREED Art. VIII.

lose the benefit of that righteousness which is revealed in the gospel for the comfort of the guilty. Thus, under the strange pretext of magnifying, and giving just views of the divine Sovereignty, men are taught and encouraged to transgress every precept of the divine law, and vilify every divine institution. In one word, they are taught to do evil, that good may come; or to fin floutly, that grace may abound,

Manufact Poly Committee and Co manner as to make way for his own advancement to the supreme magistracy and government of the whole They often brought acculations of this kind

against bim.

Similar to these are the charges which Pales brings against some godly and zealous preachers, who, if we may believe him, by their specious pretentions to piety and devotion, by declaming against national back-dictions and corruptions, and pretending to nie their endeavours for promoting the interests of religion and reformation among all ranks of persons in the as tions and kingdoms to which they belonged, only flowed and their zeal for a Jawis focular Messas; or rather flrong inclination to erect a worldly kingdom for them falves.

This Gentleman forms also to infinuate, that minifture of the gospel can never be popular, or followed and
offermed by any great number of people, unless they
have learned so to corrupt and pervert the doctrines
of Chirshinaity, as to make them subservient to their
religious pride. This infinuation with regard to popular
preachers is invidious; but if applied to Yoku the Bamiss, our blessed Lord and his apostles; who, if we may
credic the history of the New Testament, were all followand, applieded and admired by multitudes of common
people, it would be impious and blasshemous. See
Matt. vii. 28, 29, comp. with Matt. axiii. 2, Matt.
xxii. 26, John iii, 26, xii. 19, Acts ii, 47. i. 46. John ili. 46. 211. 19. Ach il. 47.

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fide in their own righteousness.

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If Palamon should endeavour to vindicate his doctrine from these and the like exceptions, by alledging, that he does not fimply condemn, nor would discourage any from using the means of grace, and performing religious duties; but only endeavours to shew the absurdity of supposing, that finners must do formething toward their own justification, or that they can do fomething that is really acceptable and well-pleafing to God before they believe inChrist; it is to be observed, that, if this was really the cafe, and he intended nothing more, he had no reason at all to inveigh against what he calls the popular doctrine on this head: for his principal antagoniffs ever condemned the doing, or attempting to do any thing, with a view to appeale the wrath of God and procure his favour, or acquire any peculiar claim to the benefit of the divine righteonfres, as much so be or any man can do. Nor did they ever suppose, that while men are destitute of faith in Christ they can do any thing well-pleafing to God, or perform any acceptable chartenee to his law. On the other hand, they were very ready to acexternal performance of religious duties, are frequently in a far more dangerous condition than publicans and harlots, or those w wicked and flagitious lives; bearing, through the corruption of their own hearts, their duties, religious services, endeavours and attainments, are too often made subservient to the gratification of their pride, and the cherishing of those presumptuous hopes and imaginations whereby they are hardened in their opposition to the true grace of God manifelted in the gospel. And they were equally read to own, that the fovereign mercy of God with rese

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PALEMON'S CREED Art. VIII. 196

to believers at first conversion does still prevent every good action, motion, or qualification in them; every thing that can be supposed to have the least tendency to qualify them for the divine approbation.

The chief ground of his quarrel with those eminent preachers therefore must be, not that they taught the necessity of doing something to procure the favour of God, or that may be pleaded, or. more or less, relied upon, as a ground of acceptance with him; but because they never could find it warrantable to affirm with Antinomians, Libertines, and other such Ranters as himself, that all using of the means of divine appointment for attaining to the true knowledge of God and faith in Christ; all attendance on divine ordinances; all concern about falvation, duties and endeavours of any kind, while men are in an unrenewed state, are needless and unprofitable, unless in so far as they can be supposed to contribute fomething, more or less, toward their acceptance with God; or that, because unbelieving finners can do nothing that is acceptable to God as performed by them, or that can be in the least available for their justification before him, they ought to do nothing at all; not fo much as attempt to vield obedience to any divine command.

Such monstrous notions the preachers aforementioned did never indeed adopt; but always had a just abhorrence of them, as injurious to the doctrine of the grace of God; and as having a manifest tendency to introduce licentionines, harden men in a course of fin, encourage their presumptuous hopes; and, in fine, as giving the most false and pernicious views of the divine fovereignty, and thod of falvation by grace, revealed in the gof-The opposition they always made to such emous imaginations, seems to be the true reaon why the letter-writer, in the fury of his seal

for a perverted gospel, has thrown out so many virulent reproaches and bitter invectives against them; though he would have his unwary readers believe, that he is chiefly offended with them for corrupting and perverting the grand article of imputed righteousness, or of a sinner's justification by grace without the works of the law. Hence on all occasions he most disingenuously, and there is too much reason to think, maliciously misrepresents their doctrine and fentiments; as if it was their native sope and tendency to undermine and subvert that fundamental article of the Christian faith; whereas those who have the least acquaintance with their writings, cannot but know, that the very contrary is true; and that those to whom he shews the greatest opposition, were particularly careful to maintain the purity of that doctrine, which he afeds to hew fuch an uncommon zeal for, and to id every phrase and mode of expression that feemed to have the least tendency to darken and throw a veil upon it, or lead men into any mistakes concerning it. Yea, so scrupulous were they in this matter, that they did on purpose forbear making use of fome expressions which have been used in a found fense by many learned and pious divines, left any should thereby be led to entertain wrong notions concerning the method of acceptance with God.

But the greatest innocence is no security against the attacks of such ungenerous adversaries as Palemen; who, that he may by some means or other fix a blot upon the character of his antagonists, does not scruple considently to affirm the most palpable untruths; being no doubt fully apprised, that with some bold affertions have greater weight than

found reason and argument.

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That we may bring our reflections on this head to a period, I think, the fubfiance of what Palemon

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teaches.

teaches, or rather infinuates with regard to unbelieving finners, is, that as the performance of religious duties can only tend to gratify their natural pride and prefumption, which are more criminal and hurtful than any the lufts of the flesh, it is more dangerous for persons in such circumstances to attempt yielding obedience to the divine commands, upon any confideration whatfoever, "than to commit the most flagitious enormities, or indulge themselves in the baseft and most criminal of all sensual gratifications; and that they may be as profitably, and left hurtfully, employed in doing so, than in praying, reading and hearing the word of God, or in uling any other mean of divine appointment with any folicitude and concern about the falvation of their fouls. Yea, he plainly intimates, that it is highly abfurd to suppose, that men wholly dead in trespasses an fine should be called to the performance of any du "Every one," tays he*, " who is born of "Spirit, lives merely by what he hears, with his performing any duty at all; unless we shall see fay, it was the duty of Lanaras to hear and live, " upon the attering of the call, come forth." And his ridicules an entiment preacher for extrorting his hearers to effay betieving on Christ in obedience to the command of God, while they were supposed to be yet in a natural fate.

This eminent preacher, when addressing men supposed to be yet in an unconverted state, had exd himself in the following manner: " Do as prefied himlest in the southway thank did; the poor "man minted, or attempted to obey, and in the attempt of obedience, he got power to firetch out his hand as he was commanded."

We must be ellaying before we find the Spirit

P Letters, p. 88, 12 3

Art. VIII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. 199
working effectually in us." Upon this paffage the letter-writer makes the following reflection.
Now you know he might with equal justice add,
Do as Lazarus did. In obedience to the call,
come forth, he attempted to rife; but happening to be dead, he was not able fully to rife up and come forth, till he got more power than his own."

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Because it would be absurd to suppose, that Lazarus being dead was under any obligation to hear the voice of Christ and live, this Gentleman concludes, that it cannot be the duty of men dead in trespasses to believe on the name of the Son of God: for the divine command enjoining faith in Christ as the duty of all the hearers of the gospel +, it feems, according to him, merits no regard. But if it cannot be the duty of finners to believe, or offer believing in Christ, because of themselves they have no power to do fo; for the very fame reason we may affirm, that it cannot be the duty of men in an unrenewed state to yield, or so much as attempt to yield obedience to any one precept of the moral law: for they being wholly dead in fin, are as unable to perform acceptable obedience to any divine command, as they are to believe on Christ for lalvation, or to hear his voice and live.

It is then abundantly evident, that, according to this method of reasoning, men while dead in fin, or unbelieving linners, can do more be under any law to God, or the obligation of any moral precept, than if they were naturally dead, as Lasaras was when lying in the grave 1. It is equally certain.

* Letters, p. 36. † 1 John ili. 23

It feems, according to our author. Airmed death, or a death in fire, implies not only atter inability to perform acceptable obedience to the law of God, but

PALEMON'S CREED Art. VIH. 200

that where there is no law, there can be no transgression: therefore, according to this doctrine, an unregenerate finner cannot be justly condemned for the guilt of any actual transgression. If therefore he is a finner, and under guilt, it must only be in confequence of the imputation of the first fin of Adam. or on account of inherent corruption. But if we atsentively consider some hints given by the letterwriter concerning both thefe, we shall find little reason to think he allows, that any guilt can arise from either. And therefore, according to his wild hypothelis above-mentioned, men can have no need of any atomement, or imputed righteousness for their instification. One thing is evident, namely, that he has furnished them with some pleas in their own vindication, which, if just and well managed, would go a great way to answer all charges that can be brought against them in respect to the guilt of any lin, original or actual.

In opposition to all this vile jargon, we are bold to affirm, because the Scripture makes it evident.

was really the case, He that is dead would be freed from the in a sense very different from that in which the apositie uses these words, Rom. vi. 7. He speaks of freedom from sin as the distinguishing privilege of believers, who therugh the law are dead to the law, that they may list anto God: but, according to Palamen's hypothesis, that is more the privilege of unbelievers, than it is, or ever can be of believers while in this world. This methinks insver-deing, as it overthrows both law and gospel at sace, and evidently saps the very foundations of all religion. Yet on this monstrous supposition, contrary to the whole senor of Scripture, and in effect refuted almost in every page of the Rible, the letter-writer founds and of his reasoning against what he calls the popular desiries in relation to this subject. s being dead to the very abligation of the law. If this

Art. VIII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED.

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that it no way derogates from the perfection and excellency of the divine righteoufness, or the glory of the divine fovereignty, to teach that unregenerate finners are under a necessary obligation to yield obedience to every precept of the divine law; and confequently to believe on the name of Chrift, repent of their fins, and perform every other duty recommended in the gospel; and to use every mean of divine appointment for attaining to the true knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent: and that, though no works truly good and acceptable to God can be performed by them while they remain in an unrenewed state, they ought with the utmost activity, solicitude and concern, to seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, or to obtain an interest in Christ and that salvation he hath purchaled. And it is no less evident, that they have a power to do many things which God in his infinite wildom does frequently, yes ordinarily make subservient to the execution of his infinitely gracious purpoles respecting his chosen people, or to their conversion and salvation. He usually meets with his people, and brings them to himfelf, in the ufe of appointed means; though fometimes he is pleafed to step as it were out of his ordinary road to meet with a finner, while engaged in a course of open wickedness, and living in a habitual neglect of his inflitutions; yea, perhaps, pouring contempt upon his word and ordinances. Thus he both manifelts his infinite fovereignty, and maintains the honour of his own institutions.

And here we may add, that when any are excited to use the means of grace with the greatest disigence, seriousness and concern, that men in a natural state are capable of, God, in dealing effects

Prov. i. 22, 23. viil. 33, 34. Ifai. lv. 6. 7. Mage.

ally with their hearts, gives them such a discovery of the riches and sovereignty of his grace, and of their own unworthiness, vileness, and utter inability to do any thing for their own relief, with their natural propensity to abuse all the means and ordinances of divine appointment to their greater condemnation; as leaves no room for self gloriation, or any such presumptuous imagination, as, that any solicitude or activity they were capable of, had surnished them with any peculiar claim, or could in the least recommend them to the divine favour.

As the author of the letters, the chief strength of whose cause lies in an artful misrepresentation of the sentiments of his adversaries, has endeavoured to impose upon his readers by giving a very false and deceitful view of what his opponents teach with regard to the matter now under consideration, I shall here transcribe a sew passages from a well-known treatise, wrote by the learned Dr. Owen, in which, I think, the substance of what Palæmon calls the popular doctrine, on this head, is as clearly and fully expressed as in any of the popular writings I have met with. That judicious divine, having formerly spoken of some things required of unregenerate sinners in order to conversion, to perform which lies within the compass of natural abilities, delivers his opinion in the following words.

These things, viz. an outward attendance to the dispensation of the word of God, with those other external means of grace which accompany it, or are appointed therein, and a diligent intention of mind, in using the means of grace, to understand and receive the things reseased and declared as the mind and will of God, are required of us in order unto our regeneration, and it is in the power of our own wills to comply with them 1 and we may observe concerning

Art. VIII. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. 203 " them, that, r. The omission of them, the ne-" glect of men in them, is the principal occasion and cause of the eternal ruin of the fouls of the es generality of them to whom, or amongst whom " the gospel is preached. This is the condemnation, " that light is come into the world, and men loved " darkness rather than light, because sheir deeds are evil, John iii. 19. The generality of men know full well that they do in this matter, no more what they are able, than what they should. All pleadable pretences of inability and weakness are far from them. They cannot but know here, and they shall be forced to confess hereafter, that it was merely from their own curled floth, with " love of the world and fin, that they were diverted from a diligent attendance on the means of. convertion, and the fedulous exercise of their minds about them. Complaints hereof against " themselves will make up a great part of their last dreadful cry. 2. In the most diligent use of " outward means, men are not able of themselves to et attain unto regeneration, or complete convertion to God, without an especial, effectual, internal work of the Holy Spirit of grace on their whole so fouls. 3. Ordinarily God in the effectual difes pensation of his grace meeteth with them, who attend with diligence on the outward administrauon of the means of it. He doth fo, I fav. ordinarily, in comparison of them who are despisers and neglecters of them. Sometimes indeed he goeth as it were out of the way, to meet with and bring home unto himfelf a perfecuting foul, taking of him in, and taking him off from a courle of open in and rebellion. But ordinarily he dispenseth his peculiar especial grace, among them who attend unto the common means of For he will both glorify his word thereby,

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give out pledges of his approbation of our obedi-

And in the same treatise the Doctor answers an objection, which if I mistake not contains the very substance of those maxims on which the letter-writer proceeds in his extraordinary reasoning against the doctrine of his antagonists concerning the duty of unconverted sinners. The objection and the answer given to it by that eminent divine are as follow.

" It may be objected, That whereas many unregenerate persons may and do persorm many 46 duties of religious obedience, if there be nothing es of spiritual life in them, then are they all fins, and fo differ not from the worst things they do in this world, which are but fine; and if to, unto what end should they take pains about them? Were it not as good for them to include untotheir lufts and pleafures, feeing all comes to one end? It is all fin, and nothing elfe : Why do-"the dispensers of the gospel press any duties on s fuch as they know to be in that estate? What " advantage shall they have by a compliance with them? Were it not better to leave them to themselves and wait for their conversion, than to se fpend time and labour about them to no purpole? Aniw. 1. It must be granted, That all the duties of fuch persons are in some sense fine. er For they have not faith; and without faith " impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6. And the unbelieving, that is, all unfanctified persons not purified by the Spirit of grace, All things are partner because their consciences and minds are de

Parameteleric, or a Difcourfe concerning the Holy

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66 filed. Tit. i. 15. So their praying is faid-to be an abomination, and their plowing fin. It doth not therefore appear what is otherwise in them or to them. But as there are good duties which have fin adhering to them, Ifai. lxiv. 6. fo there are fins which have good in them. - Such are the duties of men unregenerate. Formally, and unto them they are fin, materially and in themselves they are good. This gives them a difference from, and a preference above fuch fins, as are every way finful. As they are duties they are good, as they are the duties of fuch perfons they are evil, because necessarily defective inin what should preserve them from being so. And on this ground they ought to attend unto them, and may be pressed thereunto.

though vitiated from the relation which it hath to the person by whom it is performed, is approved and hath its acceptation in its proper place.

And on this account also, that the duties themselves are acceptable, men may be pressed to

them, &c.

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obedience. This they are all bound to attend unto; and if what they do through their own defect prove eventually fin unto them, yet the commandment is just and holy, and the observance of it is justly prescribed unto them. The law is the moral cause of the performance of the duties it requires, but not of the singul manner of their performance. And God hath not lost his right of commanding men, because they by their sin have lost their power to sulfil his commands. And if the equity of the command doth arise from the proportioning of strength that men have to answer it, he that by contracting the

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"highest moral disability that depraved habits of mind can introduce, or a course of sinning produce in him, is freed from owning obedience unto any of God's commands; seeing all confess that such an babit of sin may be contrasted, as will deprive them in whom it is, of all power

et of obedience. Wherefore,

4. Preachers of the gofpel and others have fuf-" ficient warrant to press upon all men the duties of faith, repentance, and obedience, although they know that in themselves they have not a suf-" ficiency of ability for their due performance. For, " 1. It is the will and command of God that so they thould do, and that is the rule of all our duties. They are not to confider what man can do or " will do, but what God requires. To make a es judgment of mens ability, and to accomodate the commands of God unto them accordingly. " is not committed unto any of the fons of men. 2. They have a double end in preffing on men the observance of duties, with a supposition of the flate of impotency described; 1. To prevent them from such courses of fin, as would fratden them, and fo render their conversion more dif-" ficult, if not desperate; 2. To exercise a means appointed of God for their conversion, or the communication of faving grace unto them. Such are God's commands, and fuch are the duries rete quired in them. In and by them God doth use to communicate of his grace unto the fouls of men, not with respect unto them as their duties. but as they are ways appointed and fanclified by se bim unto fuch ends. And hence it follows, that even such duties as are vitiated in their performance, yet are of advantage unto them by whom they are performed. For 1, By attendance unto them, they are preferred from many line. 2.

Ant. VIII. REVIEWED and Examined. 207

In an especial manner from the great sin of despising God, which ends commonly in that which is unpardonable. 3. They are hereby made useful unto others, and many ends of God's glory in the world. 4. They are kept in God's way, wherein they may gradually be

brought over unto a real convertion unto

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Whether the fentiments and reasonings of this pious and learned divine, or the uncouth notions of the letter-writer with regard to the subject under consideration, are most agreeable to the Sacred Writings, we leave to be determined by the impartial reader.

Some of our author's Pelagian friends, in the last age, having used nearly the same artifices, for giving the public an unfavourable idea of the doctrine taught by a number of orthodox, laborious and useful divines in that period, whereby Palæmon has en-

Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit. Book III.

e. iv. p. 248, 249, 250.

As there is not perhaps a more dangerous and foulruining imagination, than that which the learned Doctor is attempting to refute in the passages above quoted, and his observations are not only scriptural, but exceeding pertinent to the purpose, I hope I need not make

any apology for the length of the quotation.

As any attempt to discourage men, supposed to be yet in an unrenewed state, from attending diligently on the means of grace and salvation which God has appointed for bringing sinners to himself, has a manifest tendency to draw them into manifold snares, and to cherish in them such a contempt of the authority, law, ordinances and ways of God, as is likely to issue in their everlating perdition; those who are engaged in it, I think, may justly be considered as agent for bell and fasters for the device.

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deavoured to throw an odium upon what he calls the popular doctrine concerning conviction of fin, regeneration, conversion, &c. it may not be improper to subjoin another passage we meet with in the teatife above-mentioned, in which the learned Doctor gives his judgment concerning the opposition made to some important truths taught by those eminent divines relating to conviction, conversion, and other parts of the Christian exercise; which some fashionable divines, in that age, ridiculed and reviled much in the same manner as the letter-writer has done the doctrine taught by the popular preachers with relation to the same subjects. And as they and he have been evidently animated by the fame spirit of malignity, and disaffection to the power of godliness, in making such a vigorous oppolition to some precious truths respecting the points afore-mentioned, what the Doctor justly affirms of them, is equally applicable to him; who in pride, arrogance, and a malicious opposition to the true doctrine of the grace of God, equals, -year by many degrees exceeds his most renowned predereffors. Let us now hear the Doctor, who writes in the following manner.

"The doctrine concerning these things hath been variously handled, distinguished, and upplied, by many learned divines and faithful ministers of the gospel. Unto that light which they received into them from the infallible word of truth, they joined those experiences which they had observed in their own hearts, and the consciences of others with whom they had to do, which were suitable thereunto. And in the disconnection of this truth, according to the measure of the gift of the grace of Chriss, which they seemally received, they had an usual and fruitful ministry in the world, to the converting of many

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" unto God. But we have lived to see all these things decried and rejected. And the way which fome have taken therein, is as strange and unso couth as the thing itself. For they go not about " once to disprove by Scripture or reason, what thath been taught or delivered by any lober perse fons to this purpole; nor do they endeavour themselves to declare from, or by the Scriptures, what is the work of regeneration, what are the causes and effects of it in opposition thereunto. These and such like ways made use of by all that have treated of spiritual things, from the foundation of Christianity, are despised and rejected. But horrible and contemptuous repreaches are cast upon the things themselves, in words heaped together on purpole to expole them unto fcorn, among persons ignorant of the gospel and themfelves. - All conviction, fense of, and forrow for fin; all fear of the curfe and wrath due unto in, all troubles and distresses of mind, by reason of these things, are soolish imaginations - en-" thuliaftic notions ariting from the diforders of " mens brains, and I know not what untoward so bumours in their complexions and conffitutions." Palamon calls them the " froth of human pride and the idle process of a law-work. "The same or the like account," says the Doctor, is also given concerning all spiritual directions, or is joys and refreshments. And the whole doctrine " concerning these things is branded with nevely, and hopes expressed of its sudden vanishing out " of the world. This contempt and fcorn of the sofpel have we lived to fee, whereof it may be " other ages and places have not had experience. For as all these things are plentifully taught by

" fome of the ancients in their expositions of the Scriptures; - fo the doctrine concerning them is in a great measure retained in the church of Rome itself. Only some amongst ourselves are weary of them; who being no way able to oppose the principles and foundations whereon they are built, nor to disprove them by Scripture or reason, betake themselves to these revilings and reproaches. And as if it were not enough for them to proclaim their own ignorance and perfor fonal unacquaintance with those things which " inseparably accompany that conviction of fin, " righteoulness and judgment, which our Lord " Jesus Christ hath promised to fend the Holy Spirit to work in all that should believe, they make the reproaching of it in others a principal effect of that religion which they profess. Nevertheless the foundation of God Randeth fure: God knoweth who are his .

That malignant opposition to the truth which the Doctor here complains of, was then to be found chiefly with some high-flying prelatifis and directories of the church of England; but perhaps it would have not a little suspiled him, had he lived to see a spawn of error and malignity produced by Independency and Sectorianism in North Britain, more hideous and monstrous than any of the unscriptural notions advanced, in opposition to that doctrine which is according to godiness, by the Gentlemen above-mentioned.

Before I leave this head I shall only observe, that fince, according to the letter-writer's hypothesis, unbelievers cannot be under any obligation to obey the divine law, and consequently cannot be justly

Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit. Book III.

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punished for the breach of it; and he affirms in effect, that believers being still under the law as a covenant of works, are liable to condemnation and everlafting wrath for every fin they commit *; the latter must be acknowledged to be in a far more dangerous and milerable condition than the former. Any benefit they receive from the atonement, one would think, cannot be very great, if by it, and their faith in it, which diftinguishes them from unbelievers, they are brought under the law, that others have nothing to do with; under an obligation to obey every precept of it under the pain of eternal damnation; while unbelievers are wholly dead to the obligation of it, and confequently incapable of contracting any guilt, or becoming liable to coademnation and the wrath of God, by any transgression of it. The spostle Paul afferts, that so be dead to the law, that is, to the corfe and condemaing power of it, as a covenant of works, is peculiar privilege of true believers +; but if we may credit Palamen, believers are as much slive claw as ever they were before; year by their very believing, infload of dying, they become alive it, or liable to condemnation and the wrath of God for the least breach of it; while on the contracy unbelievers are dead to the commanding, and equently to the condemning power of it. Is this the spotiolic golpel !

But we proceed to confider another extraordinary stricks of Palamon's new creed, which is as follows:

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Letters, &c. p. 419; † Rom. vii. 1-4. Gal.

semilised for the beauth of it, and he infirms in with the production and and and an artist for the

definition of the fire even a finisher extender the the

ARTICLE IX.

THE gospel being only an bistorical account of some plain facts relating to the death and resurrettion of Jesus, includes no offers, or promises of the remission of fins, or eternal fatvation through him, nor indeed any calls of grace directed to unbelieving finners of mankind.

REMARKS.

HE word gripes in this proposed for the whole HE ward gefpel in this proposition, is not to doctrine of Christ and his apostles contained in the New Testament; for if we take it in this sense doubt not but the letter-writer will allow; that doubt not but the letter-writer will allow, that the promiles, precepts and exhortations, as well as doctrines and histories that any way concern man's recovery and falvation from that state of fin and condemnation be is naturally in, or that obedience which as a believer in Christ every Christian is bound to perform to the glory of God, do belong to it. But the gospel here is to be taken, in a strict and proper sense, for that which is revealed and frict and proper sense, for that which is revealed and proposed as the immediate ground of faith to fin of mankind who hear the gospel, which Pala calls the revealed reason of hope, or who read New Testament.

This he all along supposes to be nothing else

well-attraction account of a supernatural fa fesus. He plainly infin effary to be believed in or to justification, or to give relief to the conscience of a finner disquieted with a sense of guilt. This he calls the fimple truth; which he fets in opposition to all promises, offers, and declarations of grace, made to finners; though these almost every where occur in the New Testament, and have hitherto been reckoned necessary to give such a view of the death and refurrection of Jesus, as can afford any encouragement to a guilty finner.

It must be owned, that the author of the letters fpeaks very darkly and ambiguously on this head; so that it is not easy to know what are his real fentiments, or if he has any fixed principles at all concerning the matter in debate between his antagonifts and him, with relation to this subject. And, indeed, it feems to be his main delign through the whole of his performance, not with becoming candor to explain and illustrate, but artfully to embarais, perplex, and throw a mist upon every subject he treats of, to as to intangle and confound the minds of ignorant and injudicious readers; that thus he may have a favourable opportunity to instill into them his erroneous and pernicious notions, and give his adverfaries, or rather the truth through their fides, a blow in the dark. As the shall be thought have be

Were this Gentleman's peculiar tenets fript of all disguise, cleared of all ambiguity, and set forth in a plain and fimple drefs, their contrariety to the Scriptures, and all true Christian experience, would inflantly be obvious to the meanest capacity; and a malignant opposition to the true doctrine of the goinel, and the power of godliness, with a maliciour attempt to defame the memory and character of a number of worthy men, who shewed a laudable ztal, and hearty concern for the purity of the gospel found to be the special characteristics of his strange performance. But he is remarkable for a p

dexterity in expressing himself, so as to reserve a number of little subtersuges to which he may have recourse when attacked, and avoid the dint of any argument that may be offered in consutation of his darling sentiments. If he should be beaten out of one, he has another to sty to; and to pursue him through all the dreary paths of ambiguity, mesticism and observity, and the several resuges of hies in which he endeavours to secure himself from the blows of any adversary that may think fit to attack him, must be acknowledged to be no pleasant nor easy talk.

The method in which this author has been pleafed to deliver his fentiments, concerning the matter expressed in the article under consideration, is a glaring instance of what has been just now observed. When speaking of the gospel, or that which is propoled in Scripture, or in the New Testament, as he laves to speak, to be believed in order to justification, or by the faith of which a finner is justified; fometimes he appears to understand no more by it than an authentic, or well-attefted account of th facts, relating to the death and refurrestion of Joya abilitacting from any particular explication or intimation of the great end and delign of them given by the apostles and other inspired writers, or any confideration of that peculiar afpect which the he would feem to give a very different account matter, by infinuating, that in order to tion one must know and believe, not only the fa-but their import; and understand them in the w fame feefe in which they were understood by spoilies: what that sense is we shall see afterwar

Our author puts the following words in the mouth of Janathan, his supposed convert: "This fact," namely, the referression of Jesus, "first as a rock, and all the supposed to philose-

phical guesses, and to enthusiastical fancies. If any one, then, should ask me a reason of the hope that is in me, I have only one word to say, the resurrection of Jesus. Take away this from me, and I am miserable indeed. Let this stand true, and nothing shall ever make me despair *." Here, one would think, be supposes a knowledge and belief of the death and resurrection of Christ, considered merely as fasts that took place in a certain period, to be all that is necessary to quiet the conscience of a sinner pinched with a sense of guilt, and lay a soundation for comfort, and an assured hope of salvation; and that this is, indeed, all

This we must acknowledge is a very simple view of the plain truth; but then it is equally certails, that those facts, considered merely in this light, bear the very same aspect toward all creatures endued with season and understanding, and so capable of believing any truth that is accompanied with such evidence as necessarily commands the assent of a rational mind. And therefore whatever comfort this view of the death and resurrection of Christ may be supposed to afford to any of those, it must afford the same to devils and damned spirits; for they are as capable of knowing and giving a firm affent to

the truth of the facts as any other.

If the hope of the guilty, at first instance, depends wholly upon the truth of Christ's resurrection—without considering it as having any particular aspect towards sinners of mankind; such as makes it warrantable for every one of them who hear of it to take encouragement from it, and build their hope of justification and salvation upon it; the fallen angels, yea sinners now in hell, would have an

PALEMON'S CREED Art. IX. much reason as Jonathan to say, Let this stand true, and nothing shall ever make us despair. This I doubt not but every one will account a very wild. and extravagant supposition; yet it is a necessary confequence of Palæmon's doctrine: and, abfurd as it is, upon enquiry, it will be found to contain the fubstance of his reasoning against what is taught by his opponents in relation to this point. This, will appear evident, if we consider, that If any thing be added to the simple persuasion of what the letterwriter calls the bare truth, formerly described; or if any thing befides that is held necessary to justifying faith; it will oblige us, whether we will or not, to adopt the very substance of the popular doctrine concerning the call, promise, and offer of the gospel, as necessary to be believed, and complied with, in der to justification. But if such a persualion of the bare truth, as we were speaking of just new, must be acknowledged to be all that is meant in Ser ture by justifying faith, we must, of necessity, admit the shocking absurdity above-mentioned, with many others of a like nature.

The letter-writer feems to have been sufficiently sensible, that this notion was too gross to be allowed of by any thinking person; and that, if clearly proposed, stediastly adhered to, and uniformly maintained, it would be liable to such objections as could not easily be answered, and might be improved for everthrowing his whole scheme; therefore to the trath of the fall, namely, the resurrection of falus he has thought proper to join the import of it, as also necessary to be known, and particularly attended to, in order to give shat acties to the conscience of the guilty which he supposes to accompany justifying faith. Accordingly, to the words formerly quoted, he adds the following: "This sact and its import, or the character of God thence arising.

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mutually confirm and ascertain each other. This character could never have been drawn to our view, but from some divine work. No work but this could ever evince such a character; and if this work was done, of necessity there must be such a character. This sact and its import, then, must stand or fall together *." We have a great deal more, to the same purpose, in the account which he makes Jonathan to give of his conversion and

the grounds of his faith.

I shall not at present stay to examine the force of this reasoning about the fact and its import, as il-Justrating and confirming each other. Perhaps to some, it may appear myfical enough; but, I think, thus much is certain, that he supposes the import of the fact as equally necessary to be known, in order to justification, with the truth of it. Yet it can hardly be doubted, but one may know, and be perfuaded. of the truth of the fact, who does not understand the import of it. And if so, something besides a perfualion of the fimple truth-must be allowed to be necessary to justification. Something, did I fay? yea, a great deal; even that whole stystem of extravagent and whimfical notions which Palæmon, or rather his r d father Mr. 7. G. has thought fit to dignify with the honourable epithet of the ancient apostolic gospel. All these must belong to the import of the fact, if we may believe our author himself, who, in the person of Jonathan, tells us, "That the knowledge of the fact above-mentioned to forced upon him a new let of principles, by the " most convincing and satisfactory, as well as ir-" principles and practices are so many inferences " from it. +"

[•] Letters, p. 71. † Letters, 70. 77.

It would be a reflection on our author's integrity to suppose, that he has advanced any thing concerning religion in his letters, that he does not firmly believe himself; and fince all his religious principles are only to many inferences from the refurrection of Christ; or, which I take to be the fame thing, an explication of the genuine impers of the fact, the knowledge and belief of which is as necessary to justification, as the knowledge of the fact itself, it is evident, that all his peculiar notions concerning grace, conversion, regeneration, bolines, charity, church, kingdom of beaven, &c. mult belong to that gospel the belief of which is necessary to justification. Hence it is manifest, that what he calle the bare truth, to be believed in order to justification, is not such a simple, and uncompounded thing, as he would make us believe it is. Yea, upon inquiry, it will be found to contain as great, and far more groß mixture, than the popular doctri does"; for in reality, according to what has been just now observed, it must include in it all the errone abford notions which this author, or the ne n of his party, may think fit to recommend to their adherents as the true apostolic gospel. Thus to be a true believer will turn out the fame thing with being a flanch Glaffitz. And, indeed, the whole of Palamen's reasoning in his letters, is only a from attempt to prove this: how well he has executed
let the impactial reader judge.
We have already observed; that the letter-will
foresister would have us believe, that the firm

Mo have already observed; that the letter-writer so that the simple trush soluting to the resurrection of Yester, and other falls connected with it; is all that is proposed in the Main Tellement as an immediate ground of faith to guilty sinners; or that the simple belief of the same is all that is to be understood by justifying

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According to his own account of the matter.

faith: and that sometimes he makes the knowledge of the import of these facts-equally necessary to justification. But, as it would still be very difficult to shew how the bare fact of Christ's resurrection, let it be ever fo firmly believed, or any character of God thence arifing, can be faid to import any ground of comfort or encouragement to a guilty finner, abstracting from all consideration of the great end and delign of it; or of the peculiar aspect it bears toward finners of mankind; at other times he infinuates, that both the fact and its import must be understood, and believed, in the fense of the apofiles: which is in effect to overthrow all his own affertions and reasonings concerning the simple truth, or the fact and its import; as perhaps we may have occasion to shew more fully afterwards. Mean time, let us hear what our author himfelf fays in relation to this point. Thus he writes, " I am 44 fully fatisfied, then, in agreement with the witst nelles, to hold the meaning they have given of se the refurrection of Jelus, for the gofpel, the word, and the testimony of God; and to call it, by way " of eminence, THE TRUTH, in opposition to 45 every falle gloss on the Scriptures, and every falle " realoning about the light or law of nature, or " about any of the works or ways of Ged "."

In another place Palemon speaks in the following manner: "Every one who believes the same truth which the apostles believed, has equally precious laith with them. He has unseigned faith, and hall affuredly be saved. If any man's faith be found insufficient to save him, it is owing to this, that what he believed for truth, was not the very same thing that the apostles believed, but some hie connected with, or dressed up in the form of truth. So this saith can do him no good; be-

Letters, p. 73.

caufe, however feriously and fincerely he believes. " vet that which he believes is falle, and therefore " it cannot fave him. There is but one genuine

" truth that can fave men "."

I confess it is not easy to understand the force or intent of this reasoning. It is very like talking one knows not what. There is a number of words thrown together that, fo far as I can fee, have no determinate meaning at all. After one has made thift to embarais and perplex a subject in this manner, he may affirm or deny any thing relating to it. and handle it just as he pleases. Such loose, mysti-cal and unmeaning jargon merits no regard. Is it not a truth, that Jesus died and rose again? Is it not a treth fo well atteffed in the New Testament that if men will but exercise their own reason in confidering and examining the evidence by which it is supported, they cannot refuse vielding a firm affent to it? Have not many really believed it whom the letter-writer will not allow to have been poffered of justifying faith? Does not he himself acknow ledge, that this is a truth which even the devils be lieve, though they hate and tremble at it +? Does no he often infinuate, that the knowledge and belief of this truth, of the simple fact of Christ's resurrecti or of it confidered merely as a fact, include all t is meant by juftifying faith? Yet, if we may to his word for it, none of thefe last mentioned be the lame truth which the apostles believed ; to which is in effect to affirm, that they believe it. yet do not believe it; and this, I think, looks ike a plain contradiction.

But the letter-writer endeavours to cloke the dity, by perplexing the matter more and and throwing fuch a milt of ambiguity upon it.

Letters, p. 302. | Letters, p. 405.

the reader must doubtless lose sight of him and it both. He seems to grant, as indeed it cannot be denied, that many believe the simple truth, concerning the resurrection of Christ, who yet are never justified. But he tells us, they believe it in a different sense from the apostles. "Every one," says he, "who believes that Jesus is the Christ" in a different

He should have said who believes, that Jesus died and rose again; but he seems to have been aware, that the expression he has made use of, which may be understood in very different senses, would afford more scope for his loose and sophistical reasonings on this subject. If the account which he elsewhere gives of justifying faith may be allowed to be genuine, the truth believed, being only the bare fast of Christ's resurrection, is, by

far, too fimple to admit of different fenfes.

The same fact may doubtless be viewed in divers lights, and may differently affect those to whom it is related, according to what concern they have in it, or the different aspects it may bear towards them. Hence it may be the occasion of joy to some, and of grief to others; while a third fort may hear the report of it with a cold indifference, and without any emotion; when yet all agree in believing the existence of it, or that it did actually take place at such a determinate time. But the bare truth of the sale is such a simple and invariable thing, that it must be very odd, yea, extremely absurd, to talk of believing it in different senses.

Since Palemon affirms, we must believe the simple truth relating to the resurrection of Jesus in the sense of the apostles; and that otherwise it cannot see us, he hould have told us what that sense of the apostles is in which it is necessary to believe it. But as he has not thought sit to do this, in such a manner as any body can understand him, I think I may venture to do it for him, by informing the reader. That to believe the resurrection of Christ, with the other facts and doctrines necessarily connected with it, in the sense of the apostles.

different fense from the apostles, or who main-

tains any thing in connection with these words fubversive of their real meaning, believes a salse-

" hood; fo his faith cannot fave him."

We might allow the popular preachers thus to distinguish the simple belief of the truth from fuch a faith of it as the apostles had; because their doctrine lays a foundation for fuch a diffinction, yea, makes it necessary a but for Palamon, who maintains that the simple knowledge or belief of the bare truth is all that is necessary to justification, or that by believing the simple truth, That Jesus died and rose again, a man becomes possessed of justifying faith, to make use of this distinction, is intolerable. What regard can justly be paid to a writer who in this manner fays and unfays, and is fo fhamefully inconsistent with himself? If the simple truth may he believed, and yet the person who believes it i main unjustified, because he does not believe it in the fense of the apostles; or, which the letterwriter must intend, if his words have any meaning, because he has not a just view, and does not make

according to him, is just to believe them as R. J. and Mr. J. G. believe them, or, in other words, to be-

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These Gentlemen do not, like their opponents, sall us impartially to search the Scriptures, whether those things which they affirm are so:—but with over bearing considence they impose their own sease of what is taught in the Scripture upon us, as the only measure or touchstone by which all doctrines and opinions concerning religion, yea the Scriptures themselves, must be arrested. But it will be prudent to try them before we trust them, or give implicit faith to their dictates, though delivered with the most consident and assuming are left it should be found upon examination, that they are salled to that class of measures fay, too are salled, and are not—Rev. II. 2.

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a fuitable improvement of it; then, without all question, something more than the simple knowledge, or perfualion of the bare truth is necessary to justification. Yet this is the very fentiment against which the most of his reasoning about the gospel, and faith, feems to be levelled, and which he enveighs against in his antagonists, as a manifest pervertion of the true apostolic gospel. Thus when fpeaking of some scriptural expressions of faith, which have ever been thought, by orthodox divines, to imply fomething more than a simple knowledge, or eneral belief of the bare truth, he fays, "It is not my business to diffinguish these expressions in the many passages where they occur: but this much may be faid in the general, that if by any of as them more be understood, than the simple knowledge or persuasion of the truth, then something more than faith is understood, something more 44 than is necessary to justification "."

These words do evidently contradict the passage formerly quoted, in which he plainly allows, that men may believe the fimple truth, and vet not be affified; because they believe it in a different settle from the apostles. And from what has been already oblesved it appears, that what he calls the apostolic fense of the truth—is a very compound fense, instuding no less than all those Antinomian, Popifo and an notions which he has artfully blended toother in his letters, and recommended to the pub-

We have too often had occasion already to take riter endeavours to conceal the true state Rion, and this the point in controverly beaute and his antagenists; and we have no

Lettera, p. 370.

more glaring instance of fcandalous difingenuity. and gross prevarication, than in his reasoning on this subject. At one time he afferts in very frong serms, that justifying faith implies no more than the knowledge and persuasion of the bare truth. that Jojus is the Chriff, or that he died and rofe again, and tells us that every one who believes the fame truth which the apostles believed, has equally precious faith with them : - at another time he affirms with no less confidence, that this truth must be believed in the fenfe of the apostles, or no knowledge or belief of it will be available to jultification. But the wretched ambiguity and fallacy of his reasoning with regard to this point will best appear from his own words. Thus he foeaks: -"The faving truth which the apostles believed. was, That Jesus is the Christ. The apostles had one uniform fixed sense to these words, and the whole New Testament is writ to ascertain to us . 44 in what sense they understood them. Every one who believes that Julis is the Christ in a different fense from the apostles, or who maintains any 44 thing in connection with these words subvertive of their real meaning, believes a fallhood; for his " faith cannot fave him. In the days of the spofes the many affirmed along with them, that Jefus is the Christ, who yet meant very differ 44 from them. The far greater part of Christer on not easily find many who, when they come to e opofiles. —— Let us then lay afide all question as about faith, or how a man believes; and let the question be, What does he believe? way of falvation ? ?"

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Here we have a number of loofe affertions thrown together, with no other delign, fo far as I can perceive, but to perplex and darken the matter in debate. The true state of the question between Palemon and his opponents is. Whether a mere general affent to the truth of the propolition afore-mentioned, or any other of a like nature contained in the New Testament, is all that is to be understood by justifying and faving faith? or, Whether this es not also imply such a persuasion of the truth relating to the divine person, mission, and work of Christ, as includes in it a resting our hopes of acceptance with God, and eternal falvation, upon him slone? As the former is frequently affirmed by our author in opposition to the latter, he ought to have brought his proofs in confirmation of it from the spoftolic writings, and not have amused us with question of a very different import, namely, What fense do we put on the apostolic doctrine concerning the way of falvation ? which leads us wholly of from the point in debate, - and is fo general and vague, that all who profess Christianity will dily frame fuch an answer to it as best suits their Toveral hypotheses in religion, and that system of principles each different fect has formed as most greeable to the apoltolic doctrine.

The letter-writer must certainly have had a very mean opinion of the judgment and understanding of his readers, if he imagined they would be so weak as to take these two questions, "What does he believe? What sense does he put on the aposition doctrine about the way of salvation?" for questions precisely of the same import; when it must be evident to every one that they are widely different; and that the last is most impertmently proposed by one who maintains, that the simple

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knowledge or belief of the bare truth, or of the fimple facts recorded in the New Testament, with relation to the death and resurrection of Jesus, is all that is necessary to justification, or the same with justifying faith; since this is really to question the truth of his own hypothesis; and in effect to alk, Whether the supple belief of the bare truth, as he calls it, is all that is necessary to justification? after he has in the strongest terms afferted that it is.

If a general affent to the simple truth was really all that is necessary to justification, or all that in the New Testament is meant by justifying and faving faith, one would think it must necessarily follow that all with whom it is to be found are justific and will accordingly be laved, whatever mistake they may labour under as to matters of less confe quence. But this notion is too gross to be admitted and would have obliged Palamon and his friends to udge more charitably of those who differ from the and cannot be prevailed upon to subscribe to the culiar tenets, than they have any inclination do. Belides, a concession of this kind would no wo nations which they are pleased to entertain of a win dignity and importance, as being the only postolic Christians, the only friends and love the ancient golpel; neither would it leave any re for these invidious calumnies which they so liber trop out against their opponents as perventers, ofpel of Christ, &c. Therefore Palemon to to tell us; that the faith of the simple trush ave any, unless they believe it is a certain to be is pleased to call the sense of the apo fed, it only the lenfe which he a ther Me. T. G. have shought fit to chalic writing; a lenfe evidently o

to, and subversive of the true doctrine of the grace of God; as we have partly shewn already, and may have occasion to shew more fully afterwards.

But whatever might be Palemon's design in granting that a simple belief of the truth, or of the acts recorded in the New Testament concerning the death and refurrection of Jefus, is not of itself fufficient to juffification, unless we believe them in the fense of the apostles i we readily admit the concession, and doubt not but by the help of it we shall be able to shew the fallity and absurdity of the firance notions he has advanced with reford to jusellying faith, and would have us to receive and eme as part of the apoltolic golpel. So far we are disposed to agree with him as frankly to ac-knowledge, that to believe that Jefus is the Christ, or that be died and rofe again, in the fense of the spollies, or as their fundamental truths are proposed d explained in their writings, for the encouragement and comfort of guilty finners, who can do nothing, and have nothing in or about them, to recommend them to the favour of God, or avert his wrath due to them for their fin, both original and actual, is true justifying faith. When he tells us. that the whole New Testament is writ to aftertain to us in what fense the spoffles understood these truths, he in effect appeals to their writings, as giv-ing a genome explication, and directing to a fuitable

improvement of them.

Has Palemon appealed to the apostolic writings?

To the apostolic writings he shall go. We are willing that the whole matter be tried and examined at the bar of these Holy Oracles. The question, thou, is, How, or in what manner, the said and destrines relating to the death and resurrections of Jesus, are explained and set forth in the apostolic writings, so to lay an immediate soundation for the faith of

guilty perishing sinners, to whom the glad tidings of falvation are published? And in general we may observe, that in the whole New Testament we do not meet with any thing that gives us the leaft ground to think, with Palæmon and his old friends of the Remiss church, that the simple knowledge of Christ's bare work, or a belief of the bare truth concerning his death and refurrection, is all that is necessary to justification. Much less do we find the apostles ever setting what our author calls the simple truth in opposition to the call and command of God. directed to finners, not only importing a fufficient warrant, but injoining it as their indispensible duty, to believe on the name of his Son, for the remission of fire, and eternal falvation; or to the promife and offer of the gospel. On the other hand, in all places where they fet forth the doctrine of the refurrection, they join with it a promise and offer of the remission of fine, through the name of Christ, as what only can make it warrantable for finners to take encouragement from it, and build their faith and hope upon it. in the level of the level of the

Thus, in that comprehensive sermon which the apostle Prier preached before a very numerous sudience, on the day of Pentecost, after he had shewed from the writings of the Old Testament, that Yesus was the Christ, the true Messiah promised to the fathers, and that the divine purpose was executed, and the ancient promises and prophecies relating to the Messiah sulfilled in the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus; when he comes to apply his doctrine, in a manner adapted to the condition and circumstances of his heavers, he calls them to repent, and be baptized in the name of Christ, to a Pale Bellission of Sins.— Faith

indeed is not expressly mentioned; but I presume it will not be denied, that the call to repent and be baptized, every one of them, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, did necessarily include a call to the exercise of faith also.

If the apostle had acted agreeably to the directions which the letter-writer would have ministers to walk by in preaching the gospel, and which he would have us, without any reason, believe the apostles always observed in their preaching and writing about Christ *, he would have contented himfelf with laying before his hearers " the infallible proofs arifing from his own knowledge, and from the prophecies of the Old Testament, shewing that Fesus is the Christ." And indeed this would have been sufficient to beget such a faith as Palemon is pleased to dignify with the epithet of justifying faith. But it appears the apostle had quite another view of the matter; for he not only proved, that Jefus is the Christ, died and rose again, and was exalted to the right hand of God; but called them to believe the REMISSION OF SINS through his name. For we suppose it will not be alledged, that he called them to be baptized in the name of Christ, for the remiffion of fin, before they believed on his name, for neighblion at the section and that effect.

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But as those among them who were already pricked at the heart, with a sense of their sin and guilt, and that misery and wrath they were liable to on account thereof, so as to cry out in the anguish of their spirits, What shall we do? would be very apt to doubt of their warrant to believe on the name of Christ for the remission of sins, the inspired apostle addresses himself to them as exercised souls pinched with a sense of guilt; alarmed, and

disquieted by fears of wrath and shewing an earnest desire of salvation; and answers what objections they might be ready to make against believing in the manner afore-faid, by declaring and testifying, that the PROMISE was unto them, and to their children, and to all that were afar off, even to as many as the Lord - should call, or who should enjoy the benefit the gospel dispensation, either in that age, or in any after-period, till the fecond coming of our Lord. Now, it is plain, that, according to Palemon's notion of faith, both their doubts and objections, and the apostle's answer to them, were impertment, and quite foreign to the purpole. For, according to his hypothesis, the apostle ought to have accounted is sufficient to lay before them indubitable proofs of the refurrection of Jefus; and when there were once addited and proposed with such evidence as was fit to command the affent, they could never ennestain a doubt, whether they ought to believe it or net. Nay, their frong convictions, and the on proved beyond debate, that they had, even then, na belief of the bare truth; and therefore Per had no more to do but acquaint them, that the ere already policified of juritifying faith, and confi uently in a state of salvation. But so far was rem affirming, or supposing any such thing, that from affirming, or supposing any such thing, that his apply evidently impacts the contrary, namely, that though they were family persuaded of the simple truth, that Joses was the Christ, and that he disal and rate again, they were still void of true justifying such, till they should believe the promise with particular application to their sun souls.

It was the Christ, and that he died and rate against the single of the apostles, which Palemon himself them to be necessary in present to justification, is to believe

believe the remission of sins, through bis name, on the foundation of the call, offer, and promise of the gospel, made to every sinner of markind to whom the glad tidings of salvation are published, or who heats

of a crucified, rifen, and exalted Saviour.

As in the words of the apostle Peter above-mentioned, we have the very furn and substance of what the letter-writer calls the popular doctrine concerning the nature and call of the gospel, he might with as much reason have found fault with the former as censured the latter. And indeed had not a regard to his own character deterred him, it is not to be doubted but the application of the apostle Peter's fermon, formerly taken notice of, would have been treated by him in the same manner he has treated the applications of the popular fermons: for it is evident, that what he makes the subject of raillery and ridicule in the latter, is equally conspicuous in the former. Does he censure the popular preachers for addressing such of their hearers as are supposed to be pinched with a fenfe of guilt and mifery, and awakened to some serious concern about salvation, otherwise than they do those who are under no exercife and concern of that kind, but still remain steles and secure? The practice of the inspire apostle affords them a notable precedent; for find that he accommodated his doctrine, and fu is exhortations to the particular condition reumstances of his hearers. Such an example thinks, is sufficient to justify their condu matter; to obviate the cavile, and filence the di

gainst them on this head.

Again, does the letter-writer blame the popular preachers for teaching, that the divine process, sall or testimony, are directed to all the heasest of the popular of as to affect every one of them, he their not

ever to highly aggravated, and their circumstances ever so deplorable, a sufficient warrant to believe on the name of Chrift, for the remiffion of fine and eternal falvation? The apostle Peter intimated the fame thing to his hearers. . Does he reproach his antaponists for exhorting finners, at first instance, to believe the promise of pardon, and eternal life. through Jesus Christ, with particular application to their own fouls? The apostle did the same, while he declared unto his hearers, that the promise was UN-TO THEM. Should it be inquired, what the promile is which he foeaks of ; this we may learn from the commission which our Lord gave his disciples after his refurrection, when he commanded them to go - and preach the gospel to every creature ; the fcope and import of which may be fufficiently known from his own words, when he faid unto them, Thus it behoved Christ to fuffer, and to rife from the dead the third day: and that repentance and REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME, AMONG ALL NATIONS, beginning at Fernfalem +.

From these words it is evident, that the aposses had a commission from their glorious Lord and Master, to preach the remission of sins, in his name, to sinners of all nations; or to declare, that unto them was promised, freely promised, the forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life through a crucified and exaked Redeemer; which the apostle Peter did accordingly when he addressed his hearers in these words; The premise is unto you, and to your children, and a the THAT ARE AFAR OFF, EVEN AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL. This is the true apostolic gospel, to be preached by all the maisters of Christ, to the end of the world. And

hence it appears, that without a particular applicacation of the promise, the gospel, or the testimony of God concerning his Son, is never truly believed.

In what manner the apostles proposed the refurrettion of Tefus, as a ground of faith and hope to quilty finners, will further appear from a due confideration of the words of the apostle Peter in the conclusion of his fermon preached to a great multitude of the Fews, who were affembled in Solomon's porch, on occasion of the miracle performed on the lame man who fat begging at one of the gates of the Temple. Thus the apostle addresses that numerous audience, the far greater part of which we have reason to think were yet unbelievers: Unto you first, God baving raised up his Son Fesus, sent him TO BLESS YOU, in turning away EVERY ONE OF YOU from his iniquities . There is no question but these words contain the very fum of the gospel which the apostles had a commission to preach among all nations, or to every creature; for they were commanded to preach unto them the remission of fins in the name of Christ, or through his righteoutness and facrifice, with which God is well pleafed. And when Peter, speaking to the Jews, tells them, that unto them FIRST, God having raised up his Son Jefus, fent him to blefs them, - he plainly intimates, that the very fame golpel was to be preached, on the fame declaration to be made, to finners of the Gentiles. For he does not fay, To you, much less to believers among you, only, but to you first God, &c. having doubtlefs in his eye the commiffon and instructions which he, and the other apo tles, received from Christ immediately before hi alcention to heaven; who, when he ad authori

them to preach the gospel, or the remission of fins in his name among all nations, commanded them

to begin at Jerufalem.

The goipel, then, that was preached by the apoftles, and which is to be preached to finners of all nations, is, without all question, such as exhibits a crucified and rifen Saviour, to be BELIEVED ON by every one of them, as an all-fufficient Saviour, and a Saviour for him, or as fent to blefs HIM; fent, or exhibited to bless him, in such a manner, that it is lawful and warrantable for him, yea his indifpenfible duty, to receive this wonderful Saviour, and all the bleffings purchased by him and repofited in him, as the GIFT OF GOD to bim in particular. In one word, it is fuch a gospel as contains a promise of the remission of fins, of justification, fanclification, and eternal happiness, made to all who hear it, without exception; and therefore to be believed by every one with particular application no his own foul.

From what has been already observed it is abandantly exident, that to believe, that I fefus is about the chief, and that be died and rose again, unthe soule of the apostles, is to believe, every finner or hener of the guspet for himself, that be shall have life through the name of Christ; or that through his grace, through his righteousness, death and resurtedion, he shall be saved; or, in other words, to believe that, through this risen and exalted Saviour, pardon of his, swithrall spiritual blessings, including instification, sanctification, and eternal happiness, are fresh promobil, freely offered, and therefore to be fresh received, as the GIFT or God to bis in particular. That this is the genuine import of the train of the saughtle, when he says, University the being raised up his 8m Josus, sent him to bless in turning away stepy one of you from his iniqui-

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ties. I think can hardly be denied by any who will take pains feriously and impartially to consider them.

Every one, then, who does not believe in the manner already expressed, that Jesus is the Christ, if he believes this truth at all, must believe it in a different sense from the apostles; and every one who maintains, that a general assent to the truths of the gospel, or the truth of sacts recorded in the New Testament concerning the death and resurrection of Christ, is all that is necessary to justification, and opposes the same to the saith of remission of sins and salvation through his blood, understands and believes those truths in a sense quite opposite to their genuine import, as it is laid open in the apostolic writings; and therefore, our author himself being judge, his saith cannot save him.

We might quote a great many other passages of the New Testament wherein the true import, scope and intention of what the apostles declared concerning the mission, offices, obedience, death and resurrection of Jesus, are ascertained to us; from all which it is evident, that what they attested, and taught concerning these things, is never truly believed till there be a faith, or siducial persurs of the remission of sins, and eternal life, as the free gift of God to sinners, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died and rose again.

That the remission of fins and eternal salvation are freely promised, and freely offered to perishing finners, through a crucified and risen Saviour, is not only a great truth, but a truth which is the very substance and marrow of the gospel. This the inspired apostle plainly intimates, when he says. To him gave all the prophets witness, that THROUGH ALLS

[.] Letters, p. 202.

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NAME whosever believesh in him shall RECEIVE THE REMISSION OF SINS *. That is, not fer, or after only, but in believing shall receive, or be in some measure, in proportion to the strength and degree of his faith, persuaded of the remission of his own sins, through the blood and righteousness of

the great Redeemer.

To lay a foundation for such a faith, such an appropriating persuasion, if we may credit the words of inspiration, was the leading scope of all that the prophets under the Old Testament foretold concerning Chrift, when they tellified before-hand of his fufferings, and the glory that fhould follow; and we are fure it was the great defign of all that the apostles under the New Testament related, testified and taught, concerning his death and refurrection. And indeed they could not otherwise have aded agreeably to the commission they received from their bleffed Lord and Mafter, who impowered and commanded them to preach, or declare and promulgate, the divine promile of remission of fine in his name, or through his obedience and death, among all nations.

That this was the tenor of the doctrine preached by the apostles, and the very scope and substance of the message they were called to bear to lost sinuers, both Jews and Gentiles, or of the glad tidings they were ordered to publish among all nations, appears from what has been already observed; and it is surther evident from the words of the apossile Paul, when addressing himself to a great multitude both of Jews and Gentiles. That apossile, after shewing that the promise made unto the fathers was suffilled in the death and schurredion of Jesus, declares in what sense the

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might be reputed glad tidings to funers of mankind. and in what manner they were to be believed and received by all who heard them. We declare, fays he, unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the fame unto us their children; in that he bath raifed up fefus again; as it is also written in the second Pfalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begetten thee. And as concerning that be raifed him from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, be faid on this wife, I will GIVE YOU the fure mercies of David . And a little after the divinely inspired preacher addresses his audience in the following manner. He whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of fins, &c. +

This, and many other pallages of a like nature to be met with in the apostolic writings, make it evident, beyond contradiction, that the doctrine which the apostles preached was not merely a wellatteffed narrative of some facts relating to the death and refurrection of Jesus, as the letter-writer would make us believe; but that what they declared concerning a crucified and rifen Saviour, was ever accompanied with a promise of the remission of fins. and eternal life, through his name, affording every finner of mankind who hears the gospel, or the report concerning the death and refurrection of Jefus, efficient, a present, an immediate warrant to beit with particular application to himfelf; or to clieve, and believing to receive the forgiveness and everlatting life, as freely offered to him brough the perfect righteous and fatisfactory death the glorious Mediator; concerning whom the creat JEHOVAH gave this encouraging testimony by

[†] A&s xiii. 37, 88, Acts xiii. 32, 33, 34.

238 PALEMON'S CREED Art. IX. an audible voice from heaven, This is my beloved Son,

IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED *.

The promise above-mentioned is such an effential, or necessary part of the apostolic gospel, that this in Scripture is frequently called a promise, or THE PROMISE, and fometimes the promifes, as containing many; which, in a way of believing and seceiving Christ, every sinner of mankind may warrantably apply, or claim the benefit of; they being all yea and amen in Christ, to the glary of God +. Thus the apostle Peter designs it: THE PROMISE, says he, is unto you—and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God Ball call. The great apostle of the Gentiles speaks in the same dialect, Gal. iii. 18. If the inherstance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by PROMISE: and, chap. iii. 21. Is the low then against the PROMISES of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteoufness should have been by the law: and again, Rom. iv, 14. If they which are of the law be beirs, faith is made void, and THE PRO-MISE made of none effect. To the fame purpole speaks the apostle, Heb. iv. 1, 2. where the promise and the goffiel are made convertible terms, or term having the same import. Let us fear, says he, left a PROMISE being left us of entering into bis reft, any of you locald feem to come Short of it. For unto us was the GOSPEL preached, as well as unto them.

No report concerning the death and refurrection of felus, however well attefted, could afford any furnished encouragement to finners, and far less lay tree foundation for their faith, was not a promise of the and falvation, through his name, connected will be and falvation, through his name, connected will be not can an affent to the former be of any

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an to avail to a finner, while the latter is not believed with particular application to himfelf. Those. therefore, who deny that any fuch promise of falvation, through Christ, belongs to the nature of the golpel, or is made to fallen men in the difpensation eof, are fo far from adhering to the true apoftolic gospel, that they do in effect subvert, and wholly overthrow it, leaving no fure foundation at all for a guilty and awakened finner, to build any hope of the forgiveness of fins, and eternal falvation, upon. This, according to them, must be laid by every man for himfelf, in fuch good dispositions. and acts of felf-denied obedience, as men are fuppoled to acquire, and perform, in confequence of their believing what is called the fimple truth. Thus, infread of building on the fure foundation which God has laid in Zion, in the free promifes of the gaspely - men are taught to build their faith. and hope of falvation, on their own experience, love to the truth, and obedience to the commands of Christ. In a word, they are instructed to believe, that men have no reason to expect any benefit by Christ, and his righteoufnels, further than they are enabled to love God, and work righteousness +. Here methinks we have plain Popery, and a wide step

There is ground to think, that the philosophy of the fast and its impore, with I know not what character of the Deity unifing from thence, that are supposed to superfede all nesessity of any promises, or declarations of the mercy of God in Christ, to guilty inners of mankind, were altogether unknown to the application for Lowever much Jonathus, and his tutor Palesson, seem to value themselves upon the differences these have enabled them to make, we do not meet with the left hist concerning them in the apostolic writing.

[†] Letters, p. 408,409.

240 PALEMON'S CREED Art. IX.

towards downright Socinianism. Hence we may learn, that Palemon's resentment against our Protestant divines is not so unreasonable as one would think; for who can blame him for shewing a different at those whose doctrine was for the most part very unfriendly to both the heresies just now mentioned; which he and his friends it seems have of late become enamoured with, as to honour them with the epithet of the only apostolic gospel.

Palemon would make us believe, that the gospel contains no promises, or offers of grace, directed to sinners. If this is indeed the case, it is not easy to conceive how it can be said to be good tidings of great joy to all people. for if the promise, gift of righteousness, and the free offer of the remission of sins, and eternal life, through the name of Christ, be separated from the history of his death and resurrection, this can afford no ground of hope or comfort to fallen men, more than to the sallen angels.

But the truth is, it was never intended, that the incarnation, death and refurrection of Yesus, should be published to any belonging to the human sace as a ground of faith, but in the way of declaring to them the gift of eighteensels, of the remission of sins, and salvation through his name; or that they have a sufficient warrant to claim the benefit of all that he has done and suffered in the room of guilty sinners, so as to rest their hope of acceptance with God, and everlasting happiness, wholly upon his righteousness and death; and that in doing so they will undoubtedly be safe; the divine faithfulness being engaged for the salvation of all who they have a crucised Saviour. And indeed the report contains the death and resurrection of Christ, and

Art. IX. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. 241
the pranife of life and falvation through his righteousness, are so nearly connected in the New Testament, and dispensation of the gospel, that, in Scripture and in God's account, the disbelief of the latter
is constructed a denial of the former; a saying in

char, that Jesus Christ is not come in the flesh, or that he suffered and died in vain.

None then can believe the doctrine of the refurrection, or indeed any thing reported concerning Christ, in the sense of the Scripture, who are not at the same time enabled to believe on the sooting of the divine record, testimony, and promise, that they shall have life and salvation through his name: and all who, under the influence of the divine Spirit, are believe in this manner, may be as sully assured of their own salvation, as they are of his resurrection. Thus with great propriety the apostle night say, As concerning that he raised him from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, be said on this wife, I will give you the sure mercies of Donied.

dead, now no more to return to correption, be faid on this wife, I will give you the fure mercies of David.

The furn of what has been just now said, is, briefly this, that none can truly believe the gospel, or believe in Christ, but those who do at the same time receive him. That this is the Scripture-notion of believing on Christ to justification, and the saving of the fool, cannot be denied without contradiction the cupress testimony of the Spirit of God, who say, To as many as a receive an Him, to their gave he seems to become the four of God, even to them that believe as his name. And it will be difficult to show there can be a receiving of him, or of startal life to the gift of God through him, unless there has the gift of God through him, unless there has a growy of him, and the blessings of his pure thing, in the promise and dispensition of the grant thing, in the promise and dispensition of the grant thing, in the promise and dispensition of the grant thing, in the promise and dispensition of the grant thing, in the promise and dispensition of the grant thing, in the promise and dispensition of the grant thing, in the promise and dispensition of the grant thing.

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242 PALEMON'S CREED AH. IX.

What has been just now observed, concerning the nature and grounds of justifying or faving faith, exactly tallies with the account which the apostic Yobi gives of the matter, when he intimates, that the report of the gospel, or the testimony and record which God hath given of his Son, to be believed by sinners in order to justification, is not merely that he didd and rose again, but that eternal life is the gift of God to them through him. The same apostic informs us, that the sin of unbelief does not the fact the believing what Palemon calls the base matter more believing what God hath given to us cernal life in him, in an to rest our whole hope of fall of the population, as exhibited in the word and promises of the gospel. He that believes her God, just the apostle, but made him a har, because he laterally metally best made him a har, because he laterally metally best made him a har, because he laterally metally best made him a har, because he laterally metally best made him a har, because he laterally metally had given by a sure of the apostle, but made him a har, because he laterally metally metally had given by a sure of the apostle, but made him a har, because he laterally metally metally had given by a sure of the apostle, but made him a har, because he laterally metally metally had given by a sure of the apostle, but made him a har, because he laterally metally metally metally had given by a sure of the apostle, but made him a har, because he laterally metally m

Les evidents chart the reces her tooken of a table to adopte he have groing at Christ to futures and a roungle of stormal life through him. What the property has credit the table appears are acted to believe, if we they credit the tables appears are acted to be acted to the terminal life is to table to the stormal life is to table to table

Art. IM. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. never truly believe the record which God hath given

of his Son; or, which is the same thing, they never believe, That Jesus is the Christ, in the sense of the apostles; and so cannot be justified.

The giving of eternal life, spoken of by the apostle, cannot be understood of giving it in possession: for ennot be faid that it is this given to all who the gospel, it is plain, that unbelieving sinners annot be called to believe that it is given to them in this fense; otherwise we must say, They are alled to believe a faithood, and condemned for not elieving it. It must therefore be such a giving of if his as equally respects all, who hear the glad sof falvation; and this can be no other than age of it in the promise and offer of the gospel. that it is the given to every hearer of the golpel, to lie, but a certain truth which he is called to bete, and in helieving it be reasons the gifts. The speriment of this truth founded on the direct wife, rectrict to toftware, necessity implies a reving of the gift. Thus it is not visitious reasons to faith, which properly figuries affect or parties, is in Scripture called a recriving of Griff; in an and as faving faith is in its own parties. much as faving faith is in its own nature an e

priating persuasion; as unbelief, on the contrary, is not only a difbelieving of the testimony, but a re-

From the passages already quoted, and many o-there of a like nature which occur almost energy where in the New Testament, it is undeniably was dent, that the doctrine concerning the work w Christ finished on the cross, and his rejursection from the dead, preached by the apostles, and set forth as a ground of hope to the guilty, was never feparated from the promise of the remission of time, and eternal life, through his name; and far less did they ever, with Palaman, set these in opposition to each other; or oppose a belief of the formet, the faith of the latter. They never gave the le hint, importing, that what they declared and tellified concerning the death and refurrection of Jeffer, contained any electricity; to finners, or could afford them any folid ground of encouragement, further than, as connected with a promise of life through him, it implied a fufficient warrant to believe that through his grant they should be lived; or, that be died for their offences, and rose again for their suffisheasies;

e faving of the foul, though his faith may trong and lively at all times, but the

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The faith of which needs not the doctrine of uniredemption to authorite and support it, being ciently warranted by the indefinite call of the pal, and the free promise of salvation, through a office Redeemer, directed to loss sinuses of man-

without limitation or exception . This it appears, with how little reason the letter-ter declaims against, and ridicules ministers of the his purchase to sinners. If they preach the same spel with the apolities, they must declare unto the heartest, not only that Jesus and eternal salvathe freity promised to them in his name; and would think this is very like making an offer of white, and all his benefits; to them. What offers their they make to finners, they do not make their own name, but in the name; and by the hority of their glorious Lord and Master, from our they receive their commission and instrustion of the remission of sins, should be preached, is his me, among all harrions. And what they do way, is only a declaring unto men, that the onlike, the promise of the forgivents of sins, and may salvation, through a crucified, rises and the ARE ARAR OFF, even as many as the Land Call Salvator, is unto them, we are unto the fall sall; or, to use the words of the aposition of the salvation than the forgivents of sins. To illustrate them to the forgivents of sins. To illustrate them in great with insulance it upon the minutes. le greet with insule it is open the

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culpable, that it is highly commendable. And for their diligence in discharging this part of their office; if prompted thereto by a prevailing concern for the glory of God and the falvation of men, I doubt not but they will receive that honourable approbation from their Lord; at the last day; Wall dens good and faithful servants,—enter ye into the jay of your Lord*.

When Palemon infinuates concerning force worthy ministers of the gospel, who have shewed the greatest earnestmels in dealing with sinners about the concerns of their immortal souls, and in uniting them to accept of the offers of grace, made to them in the gospel, "That they considered themselves as a kind of sactors, or ambassadors for God, commissioned and impowered by him to make offers of Christ and all his benefits unto men, upon certain terms, and to assure them of the best nessen on their complying with the terms; and that accordingly they have not been negligiated in setting sorth the dignity of their characters in this view, and have plumed themselves not a little upon the offer they had to make, making frequent repetition of this their offer with great parties of the whole work and office of the ministry, and a rooted disaffection to the truth of the gospel state of the whole work and office of the ministry, and a rooted disaffection to the truth of the gospel state of the whole work and office of the ministry, and a rooted disaffection to the truth of the gospel state thoughts and intentions of men, and increase thoughts and intentions of men, and increase that to price, arrogance, and vair oftents and and rooted disaffections.

ARIAN. REVIEWED and Examined. 247

from an awful fense of duty, and of the great impostunce of the work they were engaged in ; and in a difinterested concern for the good of pening fouls. To all such uncharitable surmises. feomful reproaches, founded on a manifest ntion of his prerogative, Who fearthes the postle's question may be a sufficient reply; Who it then that judgest another man's servant? To bis Aer be flandeth or falleth

When the letter-writer affirms, that there is no indation for any fuch offer as has been menmed, in the New Testament, he evidently bes ignorance of the true apostolic gospel: we have already shewed, not only that the apo-les when preaching the gospel to unbelieving sin-ters, always made such offers; but that separate rom the offer, or promise of pardon and salvation brough Christ, the gospel cannot at all be preached, by thing revealed concerning Christ therein. ord the least encouragement to any finner-of nankind.

or

To deny that ministers of Christ, fince the days of the apostles, may warrantably make such irs, is therefore in effect to deny, that any fir ir days are authorised to preach the golf at a gospel ministry is an ordinance of Christ continued in the church till his second comin and sindeed, this author, following the examp his old friends and allies, the Security and inveterate enemies of Christ and the gospel the whole of his letters, endeavour own an edium, yes pours the utmost continued to the second continued continued to the second continued

honouring the ministers of the golpel for shell work; fals; there is peculiar spite against them, and does what he can to bring their characterisms distribute; not to much for any performs fallings and infernities that may forgetimes attend them, as our secound of the office they bear, and the warks they are employed in. This, one walk think; is a very preparence way of the wing the seal for the truths and purity of the golpel; is feems rather to carry the appearance of an emconators degree of charity against both:

This pendeenta is pleased to tell us, is Thank is in the lift plud that the apostic made offers the will very willingly lay, that they offered evises dence for all that they testified a year that they not not only offered, but freely produced it, let mean make what are of it they would? Thus for make what are of it they would? Thus for any more than offer the evidence he speaks as, as any more than offer the evidence he speaks as, as any more than offer the evidence he speaks as, as any nearly more than offer the evidence he speaks as, as PALEMON'S CARE Testament, That Jest is the Christ, and the prophecies of barpains, and the prophecies of barpains, and the prophecies of barpains, and their be that and eye again.

Art. IX. REVIEWED and EXAMINED. 249
gift of God, through Josus Christ our Lord? Did they
not proclaim to all within hearing of them, whatever their condition and circumstances might be,
that they had sufficient warrant to take of the water

Should it be refused, that the chief scope of all that the aposses testified, or the evangelists recorded, concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus, was to declare and certify to sinners of mankind, both Jesus and Gentiles, that they might warrantably believe on Christ, in the way of making particular application of him and all his benefits to their own souls, so as to say, every one for himself, Surely in the Lord have I rightentiness and strength +; I confess I should for ever despair

of being able to prove any thing from the Scriptures. This truth is proposed with such evidence, and thines with so great lustre in all the apostolic writings, that any one who denies it, may as well deny, that ever there were any such men as the apostles, or that ever they preached the gospel.

After what has been observed on this head, I think, we have some reason to affirm, that what

think, we have some reason to affirm, that what Palemon reproaches, ridicules and endeavour to undermine and subvert, under the notion of the popular dockine, is really the ancient apostolic gastest and that the scornsul censures he has thought in the pale unsthale whom he calls the popular preachers do fall equally upon our blessed Lord and his appearance to the matter under consideration, may he fall to the matter under consideration, may he fall expressed in these remarkable words.

A Cara As Si 6 Car

SEC PALEMON'S CARES AND IX de Moles lifted up the ferficut in the wilderness, even for must the San of man be lifted up: That who sever believed in him, should not perile, but have sternal lift? 3 or, which comes all to one, That through his name who sever believeth in him, shall use the bis name who sever believeth in him, shall use the reader. that this is the substance of what the letter-writer condemns, as the popular doctrine, with regard to the promise, or free offer of pardon and salvation through Christ.

After what has been failed may be deemed superfluous the observe, that the same doctrine was charly taught, constantly inculcated, and assessment defended by any most reformers to

mily detended, by our mail eminent reforms

t Joseph, 46, 16.

Att. IX. Reviewed and Examined

as it has been by all found Protestant divines ever fince the reformation: And though our author, in the height of his pride, is pleased to shew a formation of the pride of t

of the grace, rightnoutsels, and life evariating to the Christ's take. Lutb. Com. on the Epif, to the Gal. old Bag. transl. fol. 63, 102, 218.

Lex & promissiones legis, com fint conditionales, rellaquent conscientias in dubitatione. Alia est promissio Evangelii propria que non habet conditionem Legis, tamquam causam, hoc est, non promittit propter impletam Legem, sed grasis propter Christum. Hece est promissio remissionis peccatorum, seu reconciliationis, in justificationis de qua concidentar proper Levangelium.

Est itaque hace Evangelium promisso reconciliationis legalium dissabilie, quia grasis pollicetur propter Christum. Ideoque Paulup hane particulam grasis nobis diligenter & sepe inculent i ut Rom.

Iv. Ideo grasis ex side, ut sirma sit promissio: Nam hace particula si ratra propter Christum facit discrimen Legis & Evangelii.—Ergo intendenda mens est atque oculi in hane particulam, onatis. Ideo enim necesse est de hac gratuita promissione decere, at res sit certa, ut conscientis eximatur dubitatio, ut habeant sirmam consolutionem in veris terroribus.——Sicut necesse est seit certa, ut conscientis eximatur dubitatio, ut habeant sirmam consolutionem in veris terroribus.——Sicut necesse est seite, Evangelium este gratuitam promissionem: its necesse se seite est seite, Evangelium este gratuitam promissionem: its necesse se seite est seite, guia non omnes credunt. Nam Evangelium, ett gratus promissionem nous comnes credunt. Nam Evangelium, ett gratus promissionem nous omnes credunt. Nam Evangelium, ett gratus promissionem nous commente consequenter Evangelii promissionem secipiamus; id non potest seit distance, de postulat, se promissionem nostre dignitatis, ut supra distum est, de postulat, se promissionem secipiamus; id non potest seit citer nis side. Malacelium, set gratus missionem secipiamus; id non potest seit citer nis side. Malacelium, set gratus promissionem secipiamus; id non potest seit citer nis side. Malacelium, set gratus promissionem secipiamus; id non potest seit citer nis side. Malacelium, set gratus promissionem secipiamus; id non potest se sidentario promissionem secipiamus; culus respectus de promissionem secipiamus.

Firmum igitur de firum manet proprium de principale objetto fidei jufificaria, cujus respectu de apprehendene judificare a granitzar por el fice en miferciordi a Del prenistantis pecenta administrativa exceptantis credentes ed vicam extension, propre Classo Malfattrem. Nature GRATUITE PROPRIOTOMIS Brangoli quiris, et fich accipiantis.—Chemis, in Ream, Decret, Graff T.

and the first of the second of

352 PALEMON'S CREED, &c. Att. IX: vereign contempt of all the reformed churches, and the most eminent divines, who have appeared for, and zealously defended the truth in former ages, we reckon it the fafest course, agreeably to the divine command and apollolic exhortation, to go forth by the foot-steps of the flock; and follow them, who, through faith and patience, inhered the Promifes .

Cant. i. 8. Heb. vi. 12,

2 AP 53

END OF THE PIRST VOLUME.

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